

STAN LEE presents:

HOWARD THE DUCK

MARCH 1981

Volume 1 No. 9

JIM SHOOTER Editor-in-Chief • **LYNN GRAEME** Editor • **RALPH MACCHIO**
Associate Editor • **MARK GRUENWALD** Insulting Editor • **MILT**
SCHIFFMAN V.P. Production • **NORA MACLIN & BARRY SHAPIRO** Design
JOHN COSTANZA & TOM ORZECOWSKI Letterers •
ELIOT BROWN, ROB CAROSELLA, HELLEN KATZ, VIRGINIA ROMITA, DANNY
CRESPI, ED NORTON, CARL GAFFORD, LANCE TOOKS Staff
JOHN POUND Cover

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	4
DO DO THAT VOO DOO	5
Bill Mantlo & Gene Colan/Alfredo Alcalá	
HEAVY BUSINESS IN A MEDIocre MOTEL	20
Bill Mantlo & Gene Colan/Dave Simons	
THE LINOLEUM LIZARD	31
Steve Skeates & Gene Colan	
HOMeward BOUND	57
Steven Grant & Marie Severin	
WISE QUACKS	62

HOWARD THE DUCK is published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, OFFICE OF PUBLICATION
575 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022. James E. Galt, President. Stan Lee, Publisher.
Milton Schiffman, Vice-President. Production. Published quarterly. Copyright © 1980 by
MARVEL COMICS GROUP, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights re-
served. Vol. 1, No. 9, March, 1981 issue. Price \$1.25 per copy in the U.S. and Canada. Sub-
scription rate — \$15.00 U.S.A., \$16.00 Canada, \$17.00 Foreign respectively for 12 issues in-
cluding postage. All business inquiries should be addressed to Ed Shukin, Vice-President
of Circulation, 9th floor. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons and/
or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is in-
tended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. Printed in the United
States of America. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold
subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or
markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. Howard the Duck (including all prominent
characters featured in the issue), and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of
the Marvel Comics Group. Application for second class postage pending at New York, N.Y.
and at additional mailing offices.



EDITOR'S NOTE:

Ducks, like most other birds, are migratory animals. They travel from here to there as the seasons change, guided by some marvelous innate biological navigating system we humans have not yet been able to decipher. Some migrate for the purpose of escaping harsh weather conditions, and others for mating purposes.

What, we might ask, is the reason for the migration of paper ducks?

Format.

After nine issues of HOWARD THE DUCK magazine, we feel that Howard's place is in color, and this is where he will return. This move is part of our overall re-amping of the magazine line. We're currently at work putting together an EPIC format super-hero magazine called MARVEL UNIVERSE, and for sure Howard is bound to make an appearance now and then.

For now, it's back to color for Howard. I think he'll like being in color: he is after all, a *yellow* duck!

P.S. To All Those Who Actually Missed (or at least notice the absence of) My Editorial in Issue #8:

Sometimes I feel so much kinship with Howard I could retch — in the Missing Editorial Case, particularly. As #8 was under production, I noticed I was getting a skin rash. Heck, it's only a rash, I thought (we editors are *tough!*). Well, it wasn't. It got worse and worse until I awoke in great pain one morning at about 3:30 A.M., covered with blood. All I could think about was Edgar Allen Poe's *Masque of the Red Death*. Maybe it wasn't fictional: or if it was, as a Poe fan I'd gotten it anyhow.

The next month was spent mostly at New York University's Skin and Cancer Unit, where I was A Star. Learned women and men from all over the world came and looked at my disfigurements with awe. I felt *rotten*, but *important*. Then my biopsy came in.

In each small wound was a tiny bit of fiberglass.

Everyone chuckled. I went from being a Tragic Star to being A Bit of A Joke. Thus does life bring us down. All that pain and money and worry over a fluke. If I hadn't come upon a dryer where someone had dried fiberglass curtains *just* before, and if I didn't have hypersensitive skin, and if...

At any rate, I'd missed about a month of work. As the book was ready to go out, Ralph had to throw in an ad because I hadn't done my editorial.

Well, I don't know if you understand, but Howard would. I mean, a guy who gets chased by chairs and eggs and bag ladies....



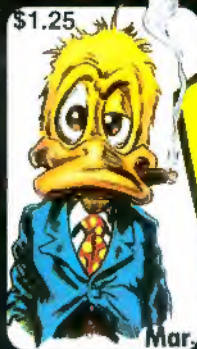
CC

No. 9

02958

MARVEL MAGAZINE GROUP

\$1.25



HOWARD THE DUCK



POUND

**THE TIME: TWO HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW.
THE PLACE: AN INDUSTRIALIZED MOON.
THE STORY: PARADOX**

By Bill Mantlo & Val Mayerik

Cover by Paul Gulacy

In MARVEL PREVIEW #24

PARADOX,
the controversial story
you've been hearing about,
goes on sale
December 31st
at magazine
and comic book stores
everywhere.



DO DO THAT VOODOO!

NEW ORLEANS-- THE FAMOUS MARDI GRAS PROVIDES FREE ENTERTAINMENT FOR THOSE TOO PENNILESS TO AFFORD ANYTHING ELSE! BUT IF YOU THINK THAT GETTING SOMETHING FOR NOTHING CAN APPEASE THE NATURAL IRASCIBILITY OF HOWARD THE DUCK-- FORGET IT.

WHAT 'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, DUCKY? WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BIGGEST OPEN-AIR PARTY SINCE THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, AND ALL YOU CAN DO IS COMPLAIN ABOUT THE CROWDS!



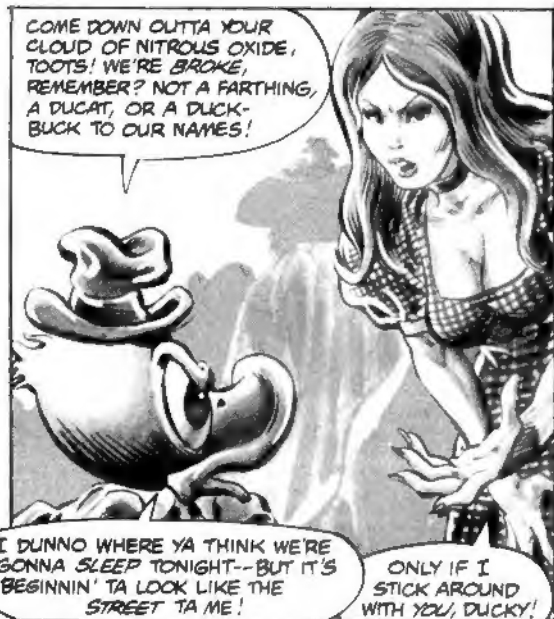
WITH GOOD REASON, BEV! THEY KEEP TROMPIN' ON MY WEBBED FEET!



HOWARD-- UNWIND! LOOSEN UP! ENJOY YOURSELF!

WHERE'S YOUR LUST FOR LIFE? YOUR JOIE DE VIVRE?

I THINK I LOST IT ALONG WITH OUR MONEY SOMEWHERE ON THE ROAD BETWEEN HERE AND MIAMI.



COME DOWN OUTTA YOUR CLOUD OF NITROUS OXIDE, TOOTS! WE'RE BROKE, REMEMBER? NOT A FARTHING, A DUCAT, OR A DUCK-BUCK TO OUR NAMES!

I DUNNO WHERE YA THINK WE'RE GONNA SLEEP TONIGHT-- BUT IT'S BEGINNIN' TA LOOK LIKE THE STREET TA ME!

ONLY IF I STICK AROUND WITH YOU, DUCKY!



WE COULD TRY AND MEET PEOPLE-- WITH BEDS-- BUT, NO! YOU'VE GOT TO BE THE RUGGED INDIVIDUALIST!

IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU REALIZED THAT NO DUCK IS AN ISLAND, HOWARD-- OR EVEN AN ARCHIPELAGO!

AND I DON'T FEEL LIKE STAYING MARCOONED WITH A SELF-PITYING PULLET WHEN I COULD BE OUT HAVING FUN!



BEV...?

HI THERE! YOU ONE OF THE THREE MUSKETEERS?

OUI, MADEMOISELLE! BUT 'AVE YOU NOT FORGOTTEN YOUR PET?

THAT'S NO PET-- THAT'S MY BOY-FRIEND.

I... SEE??

BUT COLORFUL COSTUMES CAN MASK EVIL INTENTIONS!

THERE! I MUST HAVE THAT ONE FOR TONIGHT'S BLOOD SACRIFICE!

THE VICTIM SHALL BE BROUGHT TO YOU IN LE MORT BAYOU, MASTER-- THE DEAD SWAMP!



UNAWARE OF THE WEB OF INTRIGUE BEING WOVEN AROUND HER, BEV DANCES ON.

YOUR--ER--DUCK... HE WILL BE JEALOUS, OUI?

PROBABLY--UNLESS YOU CAN PUT US BOTH UP FOR THE NIGHT.

I LIKE YOU. YOU ARE STRANGE, MON CHER.

I GUESS I AM AT THAT.



IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY YOUR STRANGENESS THAT APPEALED TO THE MASTER. MAY I CUT IN?

I'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T... OH! YOUR EYES!



THERE IS SOMETHING... WRONG... WITH THEM?

GOSH, NO! IT-- IT'S JUST THAT THEY LOOK SO--

-- DEAD!



TAKE HER!

HOWARD!

AS THE FOUL-SMELLING PALM REACHES TO SMOTHER HER ALARM, BEVERLY SWITZLER FORGETS HER MOMENTARY FLIRTATIONS AND CRIES OUT FOR HER CONSTANT COMPANION.



HAH! LESS THAN A MINUTE WITH THE MASTERS AN' ALREADY BEV'S CALLIN' FOR HELP!

CAN'T SEE HER THROUGH THE CROWD-- BUT I'D BETTER GO BAIL HER OUT!

HA-HA! LOOK! THE DUCK--IT PRETENDS TO TALK!



DO IT AGAIN, DUCK!

YES! TALK!

ENTERTAIN US!

YA MIGHT NOT WANNA HEAR WHAT I GOT TA SAY, BOZO!

OH-OH! SO THE VENTRILOQUIST INSULTS US THROUGH HIS DUMMY!?

DUMMY???



SOON THE CROWD MOVES ON TO SAMPLE THE MANY PLEASURES OF THE MARDIS GRAS...

LET US GO HOME, CHILDREN.

HOWARD LETS HIMSELF BE LED AWAY--

--TO A STRANGE GRASS SHACK SITUATED ON THE EDGE OF A SHADOWED SWAMP KNOWN TO THE LOCALS AS... LE MORT BAYOU.

ONCE THERE, HIS QUESTIONS BURST FORTH.

THAT'S FOR US TO KNOW AND YOU TO FIND OUT!

THE SOUP 'SHORT' REVEALS ALL!

ASK 'CHEEE' THE SOUP!

OKAY, I FIGURE YER A VENTRILOQUIST, MAMMY-- RIBBIN' THE RUBES WITH YER TALKIN' ZOO! I APPRECIATE YER SAVIN' MY HIDE-- BUT YA YANKED ME OUTTA THERE BEFORE I COULD FIND OUT WHERE BEV...!

ASK THE 'CAW' SOUP!

THE CHILDREN KNOW WHEREOF THEY SPEAK, HOWARD. ASK-- AND THE SOUP SHALL ANSWER.

RIGHT! WHAT IS IT-- ALPHABET SOUP?

CLAIRVOYANT CAULDRON

25¢

HAH? CLAIRVOYANT--?



Y-YER A WITCH, AIN'TCHA?
IT FIGURES! EVERYTIME I GET
IN PICKLES LIKE THIS THERE'S
A SORCERER BEHIND IT!

BUT I AIN'T
GOT A
QUARTER!



I WILL WAIVE PAYMENT.
YOU SEEK ONE WHO
MEANS A GREAT
DEAL TO YOU.

ASK, AND THE
SOUP SHALL REVEAL
HER WHEREABOUTS.

MAMMY TUBA MAKES A MYSTIC PASS OVER
THE BUBBLING BREW, AND MOTION'S HOWARD
TO PEER DOWN INTO ITS DEPTHS.



WAAK! IT'S BEV-- IN THE
HANDS OF A HALLOWEEN
HIJACKER!



THEY ARE VODOO CULTISTS!
THEY BEAR HER AS BLOOD-
SACRIFICE TO THEIR DARK GOD!

--IN LE
MORT
BAYOU!

THEN I GOTTA
GO THERE TA
SAVE HER!



BUT...WHERE
IS THERE??

BEYOND THE BEYOND! IN THE HEART
OF DARKNESS! THATAWAY!



BUT TO GO THEIR
ALONE--UNPROTECTED--
MEANS CERTAIN
DEATH!

IT FIGURES!
BUT BEV'D
DO IT FOR
ME, SO...

YOU ARE NO ORDINARY
FOWL. I SENSED CERTAIN
POWERS IN YOU FROM
THE START.

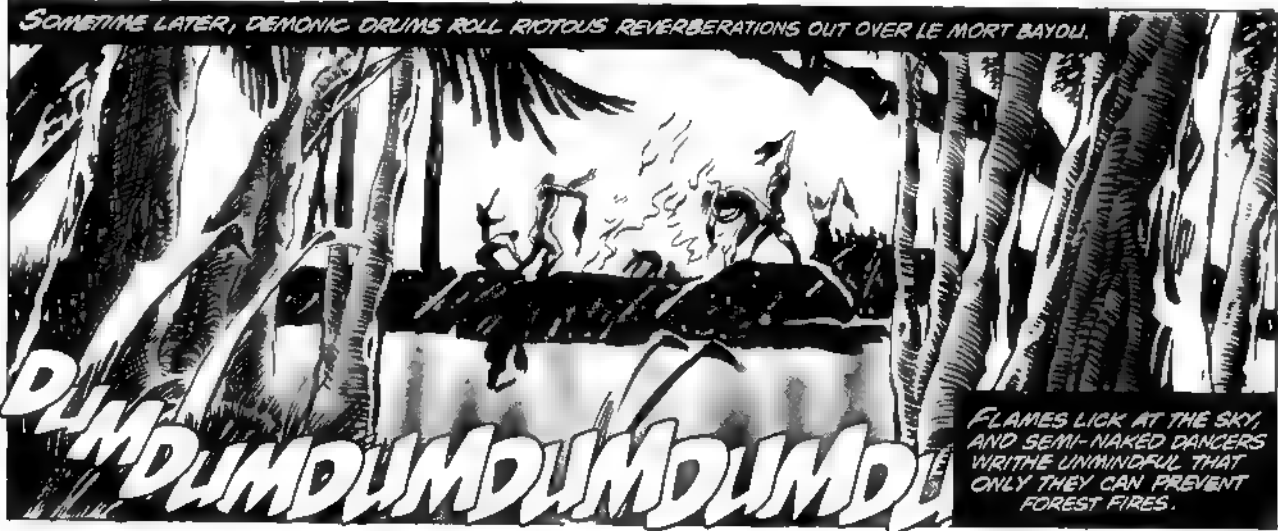
OH, NO! THAT CRAZY MAGICIAN
FROM GREENWICH VILLAGE, DR.
STRANGE, PULLED THAT LINE ON ME,
AN' IT ONLY GOT ME INTA TROUBLE!



DO AS THAT
VODOO
THAT YOU
DO SO
WELL

WAAUGH!

I DO NOT CAST ASPERSIONS
ON RIVAL SORCERERS BUT,
WITH MY PATENTED TECHNIQUES,
YOU CANNOT FAIL TO RESCUE
YOUR BELOVED.



WITH NO SMALL AMOUNT OF GRUNTING AND WHEELING, THE CRAZED CULTISTS TETHER BEV TO THE ALTAR.

SEE, WHAT IS THIS? A BLACK LEATHER SCENE?

BEHIND AND ABOVE HER LOOMS WHAT APPEARS TO BE AN OMINOUS EGG-CUP.

THEN, OUT OF THE SHADOWS, STEPS HE WHO CAN BE NO OTHER THAN THE HIGH PRIEST OF THIS GRISLY GATHERING.

IS THE SACRIFICE UPON THE ALTAR? I DO NOT SENSE THE SAME POWER WHICH WAS MADE MANIFEST TO ME AT THE MARDI GRAS!

YOU MEAN MY POWER TO ATTRACT MEN GOT ME INTO THIS MESS?

NO! IT WAS YOUR ABILITY TO SPEAK!

AS SOON AS I HEARD WORDS SPILL FROM YOUR BEAK I KNEW YOU WERE THE APPROPRIATE SACRIFICE FOR OUR DARK DUCK GOD!

I THINK YOU'D BETTER TAKE THAT COWL OFF YOUR FACE, FRIEND.

YOU WANTED HOWARD ... NOT ME!

WHAT--?! IDIOTS! DOLTS! FOOLS! I COMMANDED YOU TO RETURN WITH THE TALKING DUCK, NOT WITH THIS... THIS WOMAN!

BUT MASTER, WE THOUGHT--!

NEVER, EVER THINK!

AS THE ERRING CULTISTS FLEE, THEIR MASTER CLIMBS ATOP HIS EGG-CUP THRONE.

SINCE YOUR SERVANTS MADE A MISTAKE, AM I FREE TO GO?

NO! IT WAS YOUR COMPANION, THE TALKING DUCK, WHOSE POWER I SOUGHT! THROUGH HIM I HOPED TO REACH THE GREAT DUCK DEITY THAT RULES MY DESTINY!

BUT I DID NOT DON THIS RIDICULOUS COSTUME TO BE CHEATED!



THE SACRIFICE
WILL PROCEED AS
SCHEDULED-- SO
DO I, NEW BLACK
TALON, COMMAND!

IF YOUR
COMPANION IS AS
POWERFUL AS I SUSPECT,
HE WILL SENSE YOUR
PLIGHT AND RUSH TO
SAVE YOU!

A-AND
IF HE'S
NOT?

TOUGH
COOKIES,
SWEETHEART!



AT THAT MOMENT, OUR WEB-ROOTED HERO IS FURIOUSLY
WADDLING THROUGH THE BRACKISH BRACKEN OF LE
MORT BAYOU.

DO OTHER DUCKS
HAVETA DEAL WITH
THINGS LIKE THIS?

NAH! THEY JUST HAVETA FLY
NORTH IN THE SUMMER AN'
SOUTH IN THE WINTER, DODGE
HUNTERS, AN' BE CAREFUL
NOT TA MATE WITH DECOYS!

FOR ME,
NUTHIN'S
EASY!

BUT HOW I EVER LET MAMMY TUBA TALK ME INTA
TRADIN' MY DUDS FOR THIS LOINCLOTH AN
INVERTED LAMPSHADE, I'LL NEVER...



EEEEEE!

I'D KNOW
THAT
SCREAM
ANYWHERE!

BEV!



AS HOWARD
CHARGES INTO
THE CLEANS...

HOWARD!

SO! THE
DUCK DID
COME!

I'M ON MY
WAY, TOOTS!

BUT TA REACH BEV I GOTTA
WADE THROUGH A THROG
OF VICIOUS VOODOICISTS!



MAYBE THIS IS
WHERE MAMMY TUBA'S
BOOK COMES IN?

BLEAH!

A BESTSELLER
IT AIN'T!

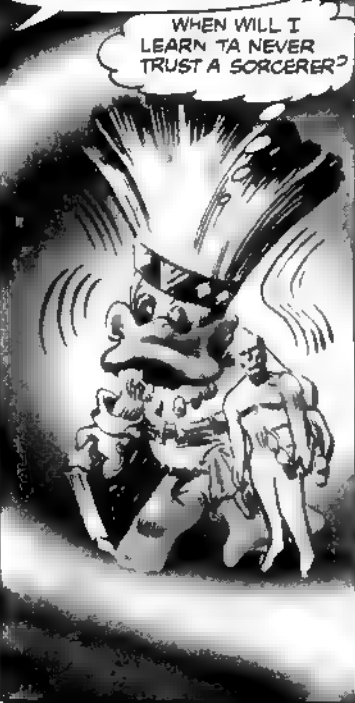
SO! THAT SENILE OLD SOW MAMMY TUBA SENSED THE POWER IN YOU, TOO? A PITY SHE DIDN'T REMEMBER THAT I WAS ONE OF HER MORE ADVANCED STUDENTS!



I CAME TO HER SEEKING ADVICE, AFTER MY PREDECESSORS, THE FIRST TWO BLACK TALONS, SUFFERED IGNOMINIOUS DEFEATS! #

*THE TWO AFOREMENTIONED FOWL GOT THEIR LITTLE TAIL FEATHERS PLUCKED IN STRANGE TALES # 173 AND AVENGERS # 152 RESPECTIVELY. LET-EM-IN-ON-IT-LYNN.

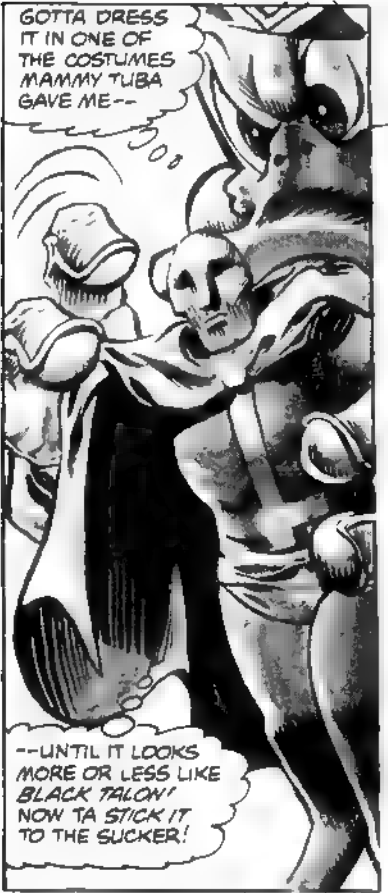
SHE TOLD ME SHE BELIEVED THEY FAILED BECAUSE THEY WORSHIPPED A CHICKEN DEITY I, SHE SAID, WOULD HAVE BETTER LUCK WITH DUCKS!



CAST BY BLACK TALON, A SINISTER SPELL WEAVES ITS SUPERNATURAL STRANDS ABOUT THE ASTOUNDED HOWARD.



THE BANDS ARE CLOSIN' IN! IF THEY BIND MY ARMS, I'M COOKED!! THE VOODOO DOLL--IT'S MY ONLY CHANCE!



GOTTA DRESS IT IN ONE OF THE COSTUMES MAMMY TUBA GAVE ME--

--UNTIL IT LOOKS MORE OR LESS LIKE BLACK TALON! NOW TA STICK IT TO THE SUCKER!



AS HOWARD REPEATEDLY STABS THE TINY FIGURINE...

OUCH!

OOCH!

EEECH!

I HOPE STICKIN' HIM FULLA
PINS AN' NEEDLES HAS
DISTRACTED BLACK TALON--

--LONG ENOUGH FOR ME
TA GRAB BEV AN' GET HER
OUTTA HERE!

YOU MAY HAVE REACHED THE SACRED
ALTAR, FOWL-- BUT YOU SHALL NEVER
LEAVE IT ALIVE!

I CALL ON THE GREAT DUCK DEITY TO RAISE UP
THOSE WHO HAVE DIED IN HIS SERVICE AND BEEN
BURIED ON THIS UNCONSECRATED GROUND!

I CALL FORTH..
THE
ZUVEMBIES!

THEY RISE FROM THE MOULDERING EARTH, THEIR
FLESH DRY AS PARCHMENT, THEIR BREATH THE
FETID ODOR OF THE TOMBS, THEIR ENTIRE EXISTENCE
A DIRECT AFFRONT TO THE LAWS OF NATURE.

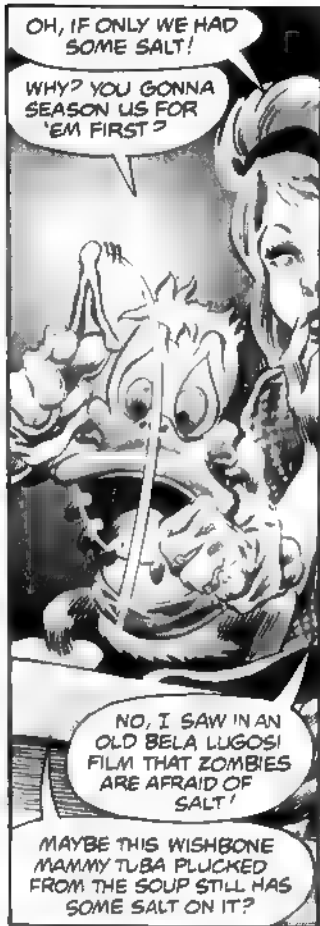
CALL THEM WHAT YOU WILL--
THE UNDEAD, THE UNLIVING,
THE LIVING DEAD...

...BUT THEY ARE ZOMBIES JUST
AS SURE AS THE NIGHT IS LONG!



GOSH, DUCKY--
IT'S A GEORGE
ROMERO MOVIE!

WHAT? OM GOSH!
WHY IS IT EVEN
THE DEAD LOOK
HUNGRY ON YOUR
WORLD?



OH, IF ONLY WE HAD
SOME SALT!

WHY? YOU GONNA
SEASON US FOR
'EM FIRST?

NO, I SAW IN AN
OLD BELA LUGOSI
FILM THAT ZOMBIES
ARE AFRAID OF
SALT!

MAYBE THIS WISHBONE
MAMMY TUBA PLUCKED
FROM THE SOUP STILL HAS
SOME SALT ON IT?



NOPE! IT AIN'T
WORKIN'! THE
MAGGOT-EATEN
MOB IS STILL
COMIN'!

MAYBE THE WISHBONE
HAS TO TOUCH THEM
OR SOMETHING TO
WORK, DUCKY?



I DUNNO' TO TELL
YA THE TRUTH, I DIDN'T
READ THAT FAR IN THE
BOOK TA FIND OUT
WHAT THIS WISHBONE'S
SUPPOSED TA DO--

--AN' I LEFT THE
BOOK SOMEWHERE BACK
BEHIND THIS CORPSE
CAVALCADE!

BUT IF YA THINK
IT'LL WORK, IT'S
WORTH A TRY!

NO SOONER DOES HOWARD HURL THE DUCK BONE FROM HIM THAN HE FEELS A STRANGE URGE TO...



QUACK
QUAK
QUACK
QUACK

THE ZOMBIE DUCKS!

HONK!

CALL IT CHANCE, OR A COSMIC DESIGN, WHATEVER HE HAS STUMBLER ON THE EXACT SPELL IN MAMMY TUBA'S VODOO TOME FOR SUMMONING FORTH...

WITH MAYBE A ZOMBIE GOOSE OR TWO THROWN IN FOR GOOD MEASURE!



BLASPHEMY!
SACRILEGE!
ENOUGH!



HEAR ME, OH GREAT DUCK DEITY! 'TIS I, BLACK TALON-- YOUR SERVANT WHO ALWAYS SAVES YOU THE TENDER PARTS!

THEY HAVE LAIN IN THE EARTH SINCE THEIR SACRIFICE TO THE VODOO CULT'S DUCK DEITY, DREAMING OF THE DAY THEY WOULD BE SUMMONED FORTH TO SEEK REVENGE UPON THEIR SLAUGHTERERS!



MANIFEST YOURSELF TO THE DISBELIEVERS! APPEAR IN ALL YOUR MALLARD MAJESTY AND FOWL FURY! WADDLE FORTH!



H-HOWARD, WHAT HAPPENED TO LE MORT BAYOU?

REMEMBER WHEN YA INSISTED WE GO SEE THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW, TOOTS? WELL, I THINK WE'VE JUST DONE THE TIME WARP AGAIN!

THEN, OUT OF THE MISTS BETWEEN REALITIES, AN EERIE APPARITION TAKES SHAPE.



I AM THE DUCK DEITY!



IT /S THE DARK GOD! HE'S COME-- AFTER ALL THE FRUITLESS SACRIFICES I'VE MADE, ALL THE USELESS PRAYERS I'VE CHANTED, ALL THE DUCK DINNERS I'VE EATEN IN HIS NAME!

HE'S HERE, HOWARD IN RESPONSE TO THE LATENT POWER I SENSED WITHIN YOU!

AND SINCE I, BLACK TALON, WILL BE THE ONE TO OFFER YOU UP TO HIM, GREAT WILL BE MY REWARD!

FEED, O DUCK DEITY! YOUR MEAL AWAITS YOU!

I THANK MY BROTHER
HOWARD FOR OPENING
THE DIMENSIONAL
DOORWAYS TO ME!

LONG HAVE I
WATCHED YOU
PREY UPON MY
PEOPLE, HELPLESS
TO INTERVENE!

Y-YOU MEAN
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN
FEEDING ON THE DUCK
SACRIFICES I'VE
OFFERED UP IN YOUR
NAME?

NO! WHAT
YOU'RE
SUGGESTING IS
CANNIBALISM...

...A MORAL AFFRONT
FOR WHICH I'VE WAITED
A LONG TIME TO
PUNISH YOU!

AAIIIIEEEEEE!

HOWARD, TH-THE
DUCK DEITY--
HE'S GONE!

YEAH, AN' BLACK
TALON'S BEEN
POACHED!

MAMMY TUBA'S BOOK! IT PROBABLY
EXPLAINS THIS "POWER" ALL SORTS OF
SORCERERS KEEP CLAIMIN' I POSSESS!

IF I COULD
FIGURE OUT
HOW TA TAP
INTA IT...

DO DO THAT
VOODOO
THAT YOU
DO SO
WELL

...I'D HAVETA BE
OUT OF MY MIND!

IT'S A GOOD THING I'M NOT
POWER-MAD, TOOTS, OR IT'D BE
WATCH OUT, HAIRLESS APES!

HAND IN HAND, HOWARD AND
BEVERLY LEAVE THE SWAMP
BEHIND.

HEAVY BUSINESS IN A MEDIOCRE MOTEL!

SOMEWHERE ON THE
ROAD BETWEEN LOUISIANA
AND THE REST OF THE
WORLD...



HOWARD,
WHY DON'T YOU
TALK TO ME
ANYMORE?

THE SPEAKER IS ONE BEVERLY SWITZLER, AND HER PLAINT IS ONE WHICH HOWARD THE DUCK HIMSELF HAS BEEN PONDERING OF LATE.

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN, HOWARD. IT'S AS IF OUR VISIT TO DUCKWORLD * MARKED A TURNING POINT IN OUR RELATIONSHIP.

WE SEEMED TO BE CLOSER THAN EVER AFTER OUR RETURN, WHEN SUDDENLY YOU DREW INTO YOURSELF, BECAME EVEN MORE DEPRESSED AND CYNICAL THAN USUAL.

AS I RECALL, TOOTS, IT WAS YOU WHO DANCED WITH ANOTHER GUY IN NEW ORLEANS... NOT ME.

OH HOWARD-- STOP IT!

* THE ALREADY CLASSIC H.T.D. # 6 -- LYNN.

I'M NOT GOING TO BUY JEALOUSY AS AN EXCUSE FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING TO US.

YOU KNOW THAT, SINCE MY DEPARTURE FROM DR BOWS, I'VE NEVER BEEN ANYTHING BUT FAITHFUL TO YOU.

HOWARD, DON'T TURN AWAY! I NEED FEEDBACK! TALK TO ME!

I'M TIRED, BEV. WE BEEN HITCHHIKING AN' WORKIN' ODD JOBS ALL WEEK TA SCRAPE TOGETHER ENOUGH DOUGH TA SLEEP ONE NIGHT OUTTA THE RAIN IN THIS FLEABAG MOTEL.

WHY DON'T YA TURN IN, TOOTS? YA'LL FEEL BETTER IN THE MORNIN'.

BESIDES, I DON'T HAVE NUTHIN' TA SAY.

S-SO IT DOESN'T MATTER TO YOU THAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP? YOU CAN JUST TURN THAT SMUG BEAK OF YOURS INTO THE PILLOW AND IGNORE MY FEELINGS!

WELL, IF THAT'S THE (SOB!) CASE, MR. HOWARD THE DUCK--

--YOU CAN (SOB!) SLEEP ALONE!!

OH, CRIPES!

ALL BEV WAS ASKIN' FOR WAS SOMEBODY TA TALK TO. WHY COULDN'T I SHARE SOME CREATURE COMFORT WITH THE WOMAN I'M SUPPOSED TA LOVE?

MAYBE YA JUST ANSWERED YER OWN QUESTION, KID! MAYBE WHAT YOU AN' THE HAIRLESS APE CHICK GOT GOIN' FOR YA AIN'T LOVE AT ALL!

MAYBE IT'S DESPERATION!

HUH? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

LOOK AT IT LOGICALLY, KID! YOU'RE A DUCK-- SHE'S A HAIRLESS APE! I MEAN, YA SHARE SOME LAUGHS, BUT THE REST AIN'T NATURAL!

OH, GEEZ! I GET THIS FROM EVERYONE ELSE!

DO I NEED TA HERE IT FROM MYSELF, TOO?!

DON'T FORGET THAT I GOT A STAKE IN WHAT HAPPENS TA US, TOO, KID! I'M ONLY LOOKIN' OUT FOR BOTH OF US!

THE CHICK'S HOOKED ON YER ANIMAL MAGNETISM!

CUT YERSELF LOOSE, KID! WHAT 'S THE CHICK EVER GIVEN YA BUT LOVE, LOYALTY, AN' DEVOTION! DITCH HER, I SAY!

YA MEAN, WALK OUT INTA THIS WORLD I NEVER MADE ALONE?!

WHERE'S IT GONNA LEAD? KID S? A HOUSE IN THE SUBURBS?

SIDE BY SIDE ROCKIN CHAIRS IN SOME OLD AGE COMMUNITY?

SO WHAT ARE YOU SAYING I SHOULD DO?

WITHOUT BEV??!

SHOCKED AT HIS OWN THOUGHTS, HOWARD TURNS TO THE BATHROOM DOOR.

INSIDE, A HEARTBROKEN BEV SOBS OUT HER MISERY ON THE BATHROOM SINK.



ALL I (SOB!) EVER ASKED FOR WAS A LITTLE COMPANIONSHIP!

M-MAYBE I'M TO BLAME! MAYBE I WANT TOO MUCH, PUSH TOO HARD!



ARE YOU KIDDING, MONEY?

THERE'S ONLY ONE PARTY AT FAULT IN THIS RELATIONSHIP--

--AND IT'S THAT LITTLE TALKING BALL OF FEATHERS WHO YOU LET WALK ALL OVER YOU!



BUT I LOVE HOWARD!

IS THAT ANY REASON TO LAY DOWN AND PRETEND YOU'RE A DOORMAT?

LOOK AT YOU! YOU'RE YOUNG, ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT!



YOU'D HAVE IT MADE, IF YOU DIDN'T FALL HEAD-OVER-HEELS IN LOVE WITH THE FIRST ABSURD MAN... ER... DUCK YOU HAPPEN TO CONNECT WITH!

BUT I CONNECT WITH SO MANY ABSURD MEN!



SISTER, I'M TRYING TO HELP YOU, AND ALL YOU'RE DOING IS COMING UP WITH EXCUSES!

MEN ARE NOT EVERYTHING!

MAYBE NOT TO YOU-- BUT TO ME, THEY'RE A LOT!



ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT-- I'LL CONCEDE THAT POINT!

BUT YOUR HOWARD'S NOT EVEN A MAN! SURELY YOU'RE AWARE OF THAT?



BUT HOWARD'S... SPECIAL.

BEFORE I MET HIM I FELT SO... SO UNSATISFIED ALL THE TIME.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME, DEAR!

BUT ARE YOU SURE THE ATTRACTION ISN'T MERELY PHYSICAL? I MEAN, YOU HAVE HAD A LOT OF VERY STRANGE BOYFRIENDS...



NOW WHO'S FORGETTING THAT HOWARD'S A DUCK? NO! HOWARD'S GOOD FOR ME!

WE FULFILLED A SENSE OF MUTUAL NEED, OF MUTUAL TRUST!

BESIDES, THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER GREAT WOMEN IN HISTORY WHO FOUND HAPPINESS IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM!



FOR INSTANCE?

OH, YOU KNOW! LEDA DIDN'T MIND THAT ZEUS CAME TO HER AS A SWAN!

AND THEN THERE ARE ALL THOSE STORIES ABOUT CATHERINE THE GREAT AND HORSES...



SO WHAT IF MY LOVE FOR HOWARD IS PARTLY PHYSICAL? IT'S STILL LOVE!

EVEN WHEN HE TREATS YOU LIKE DIRT?



WELL, I--I ADMIT THAT HOWARD'S BEEN TAKING ME FOR GRANTED, LATELY-- OR, RATHER, HE'S BEEN TREATING ME AS SNIDELY AND AS CYNICALLY AS HE TREATS ALL HAIRLESS APES.

IF ONLY HE'D TALK TO ME-- TELL ME WHAT'S BOTHERING HIM!

I'M SURE I COULD MAKE THINGS ALL RIGHT FOR BOTH OF US!

BUT THERE ARE TIMES, EVEN WHEN THEY WANT TO, THAT LOVERS CANNOT TAKE THE PARTLY-OPEN DOOR.



SCRATCH
FEET

HEY, KID!
YO! NEED
A LIGHT?

YOU WOULDN'T
HAVE ONE, JUST TA
SHOW HOW MUCH
MORE ORGANIZED
YA ARE THAN ME!



ONE OF US HAS TA BE ON TOP OF
THINGS! YOU SURE AIN'T!

YOU GOT IT EASY,
BEIN' ONLY A
REFLECTION! YA
AIN'T GOT MY
PROBLEMS!



BUT THERE AIN'T A HASSLE ON
THIS MUDBALL OR BACK ON
DUCKWORLD THAT INHALIN' THE
SMOKE OF A GOOD HAVANA
WON'T SOLVE, IS THERE?

YEAH!
RIGHT!



WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT'M
I SAYIN'? WRONGS!

YER JUST TRYIN' TA
CONFUSE ME--LULL ME
INTA A FALSE SENSE OF
SECURITY--AN' THEN SOCK
ME WITH THAT STUFF
ABOUT DITCHIN' BEV
AGAIN!



IF THE THOUGHT'S
THERE, IT'S YOURS!
KIDDO!

CHECK OUT
HOW YER ACTIN'!
THE BROAD'S
GOT YA WALTZIN'
IN CIRCLES!

YER
SUFFOCATIN'
KID!
DYIN'!!

SHADDUP! I DON'T
WANNA THINK ABOUT IT!

YA STOP THINKIN', KIDDO, AN' YER NO BETTER THAN A VEGETABLE! YA STOP FEELIN', YA STOP LIVIN', YA TAKE THE SLOW AN' SEEDY SLIDE TA OBLIVION!

ME, I'M A SURVIVOR! I DON'T INTEND TA GO DOWN WITH THE DRIP!

WHAT'RE YA HANGIN' ON FOR? YER YOUNG! YA CUT A FINE FIGURE OF A FOWL! YA DISCOVERED THAT YA CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN, BUT THERE'S PLENTY OF DUCK-BUCKS TA BE MADE ON THIS WORLD!

HOW?

YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THE MARKET'S JUST FOAMIN' AT THE MOUTH TA OFFER A TALKIN' DUCK UP TA THE MEDIA-BLITZED PUBLIC!

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT YOU WERE LEADING UP TO! I ALREADY TALKED THAT ONE OUT WITH BEV, AN' SHE'S AGAINST ME EXPLOITIN' MY DUCKNESS!

IT'S CHEAP! IT'S GAUDY! IT'S UNDIGNIFIED! IT'S...

IT'S LUCRATIVE AS HELL, AIN'T IT? YOU COULD BE RICH, BOY! FAMOUS! A STAR!

AN' WHO'S KEEPIN' YA FROM SLURPIN' ALL THAT GRAVY?

A SMALL-MINDED, SELF-CENTERED, OVERLY EMOTIONAL BROAD, THAT'S WHO!

BEV?

NO! YA GOT IT ALL TWISTED!

BEV'S LOOKIN' OUT FOR ME! KEEPIN' ME SANE LIKE SHE'S ALWAYS DONE!

WHEN THE COSMIC AXIS FIRST SHIFTED
AN' DUMPED ME HERE ON THIS PLANET
OF HAIRLESS APES, I WAS A
FRIENDLESS FOWL!

BEV CAME
AN' TOOK ME
BY THE
HAND!

SHE COULDA EXPLOITED OUR
RELATIONSHIP TA MAKE HERSELF
A BUNDLE, BUT SHE NEVER
THOUGHT THAT WAY!

ME, I'VE BEEN THE SELFISH AN' SELF-
CENTERED ONE, DENYIN' HER NEEDS
WHILE I DWELT ON MY OWN SELF-PTY!

I'M TELLIN' YA, KID--TOUCH THAT DOORKNOB, AN' YER MAKIN'
YOUR BIGGEST MISTAKE! APOLOGIZE, AN' YOU'LL BE TIED
TA THE BROAD FOREVER!

SO WHAT'S GO WRONG WITH THAT? THE
THING THAT'S BEEN TEARIN' MY GUTS OUT
AN' KEEPIN' ME QUIET--

--IS THAT I'VE BEEN THINKIN'
THAT MAKIN' A LIFETIME
COMMITMENT TA BEV IS THE
END OF MY LIFE!

BUT IT AIN'T! IT'D BE THE START
OF SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL!
'SCUSE ME, BUB--

--BUT I GOT
SOME APOLOGIZIN'
TA DO!

IGNORING HIS OWN FEARS AND SELF-
DOUBTS, IT IS A DETERMINED DRAKE THAT
MAKES A FATEFUL DECISION.

UNFORTUNATELY, HE MAY HAVE
TAKEN TOO LONG!

BEV, HONEY,
I'VE BEEN
THINKIN'...

S-SO HAVE
I, HOWARD



I-I REALIZE HOW MUCH YA MEAN TA ME, HOW MUCH I NEED YA!

WITHOUT YOU BY MY SIDE, LIFE'D BE A BUGHOUSE! I-I COULD NEVER STAY SANE!

I'M GLAD YOU NEED ME TO TAKE CARE OF YOU HOWARD, BUT LIKE I TOLD YOU--



-- I HAVE NEEDS TOO, AND YOU'VE BECOME JUST TOO SELF-ABSORBED TO FULFILL THEM. I-I THINK MAYBE WE'D BETTER GO OUR SEPERATE WAYS FOR AWHILE...

TO DISCOVER WHAT IT IS WE BOTH NEED FROM OURSELVES SO THAT IF WE EVER GET BACK TOGETHER WE'LL KNOW WHAT WE NEED TO MAKE IT TOGETHER.

IT-IT'S BEEN MORE FUN THAN I CAN TELL YOU, DUCKY... B-BUT THIS IS GOOD-BYE!



GOOD ? GULP ?
BYE ?



BEV, YA--YA CAN'T MEAN IT! IT...



...IT'S RAININ' OUT THERE!



I'M SORRY,
DUCKY...

Y-YEAH

DUCKS SHED WATER, RIGHT?
YOU'LL SURVIVE. RIGHT NOW, I--I
THINK I NEED TO BE ALONE.



ME,
TOO



WAAUGH! YOU
'IDIOT' COME
BACK!

WITHOUT THE BROAD,
YOU'LL GO NUTS IN
A MATTER OF DAYS!



TH- THAT'S WHAT
I WAS TRYIN' TA
TELL YA... TA TELL
MYSELF.

I-I GUESS
I TOOK
TOO LONG
LEARNIN'--

--THAT YA CAN'T PLAY
AROUND WHILE YER BABY
FEELS BLUE.

IT IS NOT RAIN THAT DAMPENS THE EYE OF
HOWARD THE DUCK AS HE SOFTLY SHUTS THE
MOTEL ROOM DOOR.



DRY THOSE TEARS, DEAR!
YOU'VE JUST COME TO YOUR
SENSES AND PUT YOUR OWN
INDEPENDENCE FIRST!

YEAH?

SO WHY DO I FEEL
LIKE THROWING UP?

THERE ARE CRESTS AND CREVICES IN EVERY RELATIONSHIP. THIS ONE, HOWEVER, QUALIFIES AS A
CERTIFIED CRATER.

**SPECIAL GUEST CREATOR
OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE!**



NEW YORK STATLER HOTEL, 7th Avenue & 33rd St.
in Manhattan, New York. Tons of old comics on
sale; meet Marvel pros; giant film show; and
a special tribute to MARVEL with STAN LEE! For
free info write to CREATION, 421 7th Ave. #908,
New York, N.Y. 10001. The COMIC CONVENTION is
also coming to ATLANTA, PHILADELPHIA, & OHIO,
so fans in those areas please write us too!

CLASSIFIED

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PART-TIME

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Experienced Guaranteed in Varied Occupations: Private Chauffeur, Short Order Cook, Congenial Companion, Decoy, Political Candidate, Satirical Essays for National Press.

REFERENCES SUPPLIED UPON
REQUEST

DUCK

MARVEL COMICS
575 MADISON AVE.
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022



★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MURDER!
MAYHEM!
MISANTHROPY!

The

INOLEUM LIZARD

BUT FIRST, HEAR THE HIGH-PITCHED SQUEAL...
AND LISTEN TO THAT SEEMINGLY ENDLESS HISS...

...THE SOUNDS OF A TRAIN PULLING INTO A STATION...



SO, HERE I AM IN CHICAGO! JUST AS I PLANNED TO BE!

BUT, SO WHAT? WHO CARES? I CERTAINLY DON'T

...NOT ANYMORE.

I CAME HERE BECAUSE I THOUGHT A NEW LOCALE MIGHT HELP TAKE MY MIND OFF BEV!



I SHOULD'VE REALIZED THAT WOULD NEVER WORK!

CHICAGO, CLEVELAND, NEW ORLEANS--THEY'D ALL BE THE SAME TO ME... NOW!

I'M BECOMIN' TOO HUMANIZED.



...TOO MUCH LIKE THE HAIRLESS APES ON THIS NUTZO WORLD!



I'M NO LONGER A LONER! I FOUND MYSELF A WOMAN!

AND NOW, EVEN THOUGH WE'RE NO LONGER TOGETHER, I STILL CAN'T GET MY MIND OFF HER!

BUT THE WORST OF IT IS THE WAY I TREATED HER WHILE WE WERE TOGETHER..



TALK ABOUT BECOMIN' HUMANIZED! I STARTED TAKIN' HER FOR GRANTED, JUST LIKE A CRUMMY HAIRLESS APE WOULD.



NO WONDER SHE DECIDED WE OUGHTTA GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS.
AN' AFTER ALL SHE DID FOR ME--



--KEEPIN' ME SANE IN THIS FOUL-SMELLIN' WORLD!
AND NOW THAT I'M ALONE AGAIN, A PART OF ME FEELS LIKE SLIDIN' OFF THE DEEP END!



BAM
BAM

WHA--?
WHERE AM I?
HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN WATCHIN' WHERE I BEEN WALKIN'!



THIS... THIS IS LIKE THE CHICAGO I READ ABOUT!

NO WAY, SNOOPER!

GIVE IT UP, THAXTON! I'VE GOT YOU DEAD TO RIGHTS!

BAM

BUT... I THOUGHT THIS SORT'A THING ENDED YEARS AGO!

NOTHIN' LIKE A
COUPLE'A GUNSHOTS
TA GET YA BACK
TA REALITY.



EITHER THAT -- OR I'VE
GONE ALL THE WAY 'ROUND
THE BEND, AN' THIS IS ALL
JUST HAPPENIN' IN
MY HEAD.



YEAH--
BUT
WHICH
IS IT?



WHATEVER
IT IS, IT'S
COMIN' AT
ME REAL
FAST... REAL--

OUT OF MY WAY,
YOU JERK!



UNNGH!

WHO KNOWS HOW LONG
THE DARKNESS THAT
RAPIDLY ENSUES LASTS?

MOMENTS?

MONTHS?

SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT
FINALLY THE INKY SHROUD
LIFTS, AS HAZY SHAPES
TAKE FORM BEFORE A
FORLORN FOWL'S EYES...

... AND SOLIDIFY INTO SOLID
WOOD AND RATTY CUSHIONS...

WHAT SORT'A
PLACE IS THIS?
LOOKS LIKE
SOMETHIN'
OUTTA THE
HAIRLESS APE
'THIRTIES!

Oooo... MY
ACHIN' HEAD!
FEELS LIKE THERE'S
SEVEN JACKHAMMERS
IN THERE!

WHERE AM
I, ANYWAY?
AN' HOW DID
I GET HERE?

THEN, WITH A GLANCE AT THE DOOR...

DIRK BYRD
PRIVATE
DETECTIVE

A A
PRIVATE
DETECTIVE'S
OFFICE!



SURE, NOW I GET IT! ONE'A THOSE GUNMEN MUST'A BEEN A PRIVATE EYE! AND, AFTER I GOT KNOCKED COLD, HE BROUGHT ME BACK HERE, TO HIS OFFICE!

BUT... WHERE IS HE NOW?

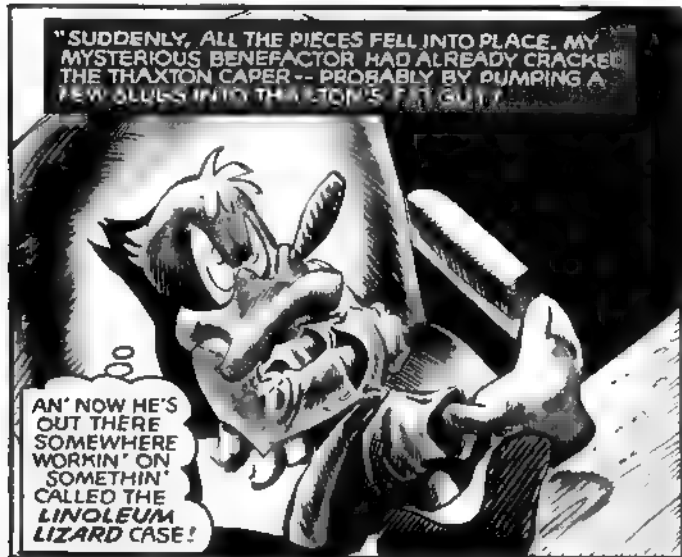


MAYBE HE LEFT A NOTE FOR ME UP ON HIS DESK!



NOPE! NOTHIN' FOR ME! BUT WHAT'S THIS? THE THAXTON CASE-- SOLVED!

SEEMS TO ME THAT'S WHAT ONE'A THE GUNMEN CALLED THE OTHER!



"SUDDENLY, ALL THE PIECES FELL INTO PLACE. MY MYSTERIOUS BENEFACTOR HAD ALREADY CRACKED THE THAXTON CAPER-- PROBABLY BY PUMPING A FEW BLUES INTO THAXTON'S FAT GUT!

AN' NOW HE'S OUT THERE SOMEWHERE WORKIN' ON SOMETHIN' CALLED THE LINOLEUM LIZARD CASE!



BUT, WHAT WAS REALLY GETTIN' TO ME WAS THE IDEA OF BEING A PRIVATE SNOOP!

MAYBE THIS IS WHAT I NEED, NOW THAT I AIN'T WITH BEV!

THIS SORTA LIFE MIGHT JUST BE EXCITIN' ENOUGH TO GET MY MIND OFF HER!

YEAH--I CAN JUST
PICTURE IT... 'HOWARD
THE DUCK, PRIVATE
DETECTIVE' PRINTED
ON THE DOOR. I
SHOULD'A THOUGHT
OF THIS BEFORE!

IT'D BE TH'
PERFECT JOB
TO SUIT MY
TEMPERA-
MENT!

THAT'S WHEN SHE
BREEZED IN-- A
SYMPHONY'A
SULTRY SEDUCTIVE
MOTION, NOT TO
MENTION AN OUT-
FIT THAT FIT LIKE
SKIN IN ALL'A THE
RIGHT PLACES...

SO! I THOUGHT I'D FIND
YOU HERE! TAKING IT
EASY WHEN YOU SHOULD
BE HARD AT WORK!

YEH? AN' WHAT'S IT
TO YA, BABE?

YOU'RE... YOU'RE A DUCK!

AND
WHATTAYA
GOT AGAINST
THAT?

I SUPPOSE I
SHOULD HAVE
REALIZED WHAT
YOU WERE WHEN
I FIRST SAW
YOUR NAME!
IT WAS THE WAY
YOU SPELL 'BYRD'
THAT THREW ME.

NOT THAT IT
MATTERS. WHAT'S
IMPORTANT IS THAT
YOU'RE SITTING
AROUND HERE ON
YOUR TAIL-
FEATHERS, WHEN
YOU SHOULD BE
WORKING ON
THE CASE!

NOW, JUST
A MINUTE,
LADY!

IF YOU
THINK
I'M--

OH NO YOU
DON'T! YOU'RE
NOT GOING TO
WEASEL OUT
OF THIS ONE,
MR. BYRD!



WHEN I CALLED FOUR HOURS AGO, YOU SAID YOU'D TAKE THE CASE! AND YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE I'M GOING TO HOLD YOU TO IT!

BUT...

YOU SAID YOU'D BE RIGHT OUT TO THE HOUSE! MATER IS STILL WAITING! AND SHE'S NOT THE TYPE WHO LIKES TO BE KEPT WAITING!

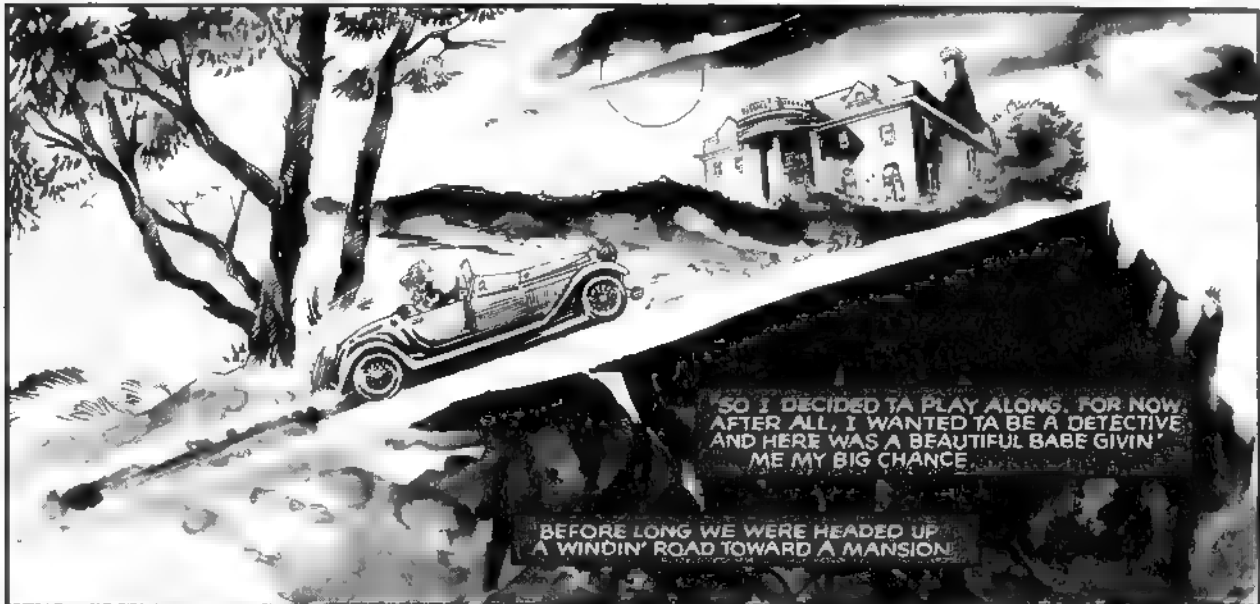


NOR, FOR THAT MATTER, AM I! NOW, COME ON ALONG!

IF YOU CAN'T GET THERE UNDER YOUR OWN STEAM, I SUPPOSE I'LL JUST HAVE TO DRIVE YOU THERE MYSELF!

BUT...

YA COULD TELL SHE WAS USED TA HAVIN' HER OWN WAY.



SO I DECIDED TA PLAY ALONG. FOR NOW, AFTER ALL, I WANTED TA BE A DETECTIVE AND HERE WAS A BEAUTIFUL BABE GIVIN' ME MY BIG CHANCE.

BEFORE LONG WE WERE HEADED UP A WINDIN' ROAD TOWARD A MANSION.



...WHERE WE GOT MET AT THE DOOR BY SOMEONE OUTTA A NIGHTMARE.

WELCOME BACK, MISS SUSAN. I'LL INFORM YOUR MOTHER THAT YOU BROUGHT COMPANY.

ULP! IF THAT'S THE BUTLER, THEN I KNOW WHO DID IT.





QUICK!
IN HERE!



YOU'RE THE PRIVATE
DETECTIVE, AIN'T'CHA?

LISTEN--YA GOTTA STAY AWAY
FROM MY MOTHER AND MY
SISTER! THEY'RE BOTH EVIL! I'M
THE ONLY NICE ONE IN OUR FAMILY!



HERE! BEFORE MY
SISTER GETS BACK,
HIDE IN THIS CLOSET!
AND I'LL SNEAK YOU
OUT OF THE HOUSE
LATER... WHEN IT'S SAFE!

I CAN'T
HIDE IN
HERE!



THERE'S
SOMEONE
ALREADY
IN HERE!



YIPE!

IT WAS AMAZIN' HOW QUICKLY THE KID CALMED DOWN. NOT A SECOND PASSED AND ALREADY SHE WAS CALM AS CHIPPED BEEF ON TOAST.

HE AIN'T GOT A WALLET ON HIM. WHOEVER KNIFED HIM MUSTA TOOK IT!

BUT THERE IS A CARD IN HIS HAT! IT'S--

--WELL, WHADDAYA KNOW!

IT'S YOUR CARD, MR. DETECTIVE! YOU KNOW THIS GUY?

754 0134
DIRK BYRD

PRIVATE
DETECTIVE

N-NO! NEVER SAW HIM BEFORE IN MY LIFE!

... BUT MAYBE THAT ISN'T STRICTLY TRUE! MAYBE I DID SEE HIM FER A SEC, ON A DARKENED STREET IN DOWNTOWN CHICAGO!

... BECAUSE SOMETHING TELLS ME THIS IS DIRK BYRD HIMSELF!

JEEVES, GET IN HERE AND CLEAN UP THIS MESS!

WHA--? BUT, BUT THAT'S A DEAD BODY!

I KNOW IT'S A DEAD BODY! I DON'T NEED YOU TO TELL ME IT'S A DEAD BODY! NOW, JUST CLEAN IT UP!

Y-YES, MISS MISSY! WHATEVER YOU SAY!

THUD





"I'D MET SOME LULUS BUT THIS ONE TOOK THE COLD CREAM."

YOU MAY NOT KNOW IT TO LOOK AT ME, MR. BYRD, BUT I HAVEN'T LONG TO LIVE! I'VE ALREADY FACED THAT FACT!

WHAT I CAN'T FACE IS THE IDEA OF LEAVING ALL MY MONEY TO MY TWO SILLY DAUGHTERS!



THEY'RE VAIN; THEY HAVE LOOSE MORALS; AND THEY'RE STUPID!

ONE COULD HARDLY BLAME ME FOR PREFERRING TO LEAVE MOST OF MY FORTUNE TO MY TWO SONS, HINKY AND DINKY!

BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, I HAVE NO IDEA IF THEY'RE EVEN STILL ALIVE!



THIS IS A PICTURE OF THEM! THEY DISAPPEARED SOON AFTER IT WAS TAKEN!

I WANT YOU TO FIND THEM... IF YOU CAN!



I'M WILLING TO PAY YOU QUITE A LOT, A SMALL FORTUNE PERHAPS-- EVEN IF YOU DON'T SUCCEED!

FOR A RETAINER, HERE IS TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS! THAT WILL SUFFICE, WILL IT NOT?

YEAH, SURE...



DON'T WORRY, LADY; I'LL GET ON IT RIGHT AWAY!



SURE I'M GONNA GET ON IT!

ALL I'M GONNA DO IS GET OUTTA THIS FUNNY FARM...

...AND FAST!

"SURE, A PART OF ME FELT THAT I WAS COPPIN' OUT, BUT THERE WERE OTHER THINGS TO THINK OF AS WELL..."

I'D BE CRAZY TO GET INVOLVED IN SOMETHING AS WHACKED-OUT AS THIS! DIRK BYRD, A PROFESSIONAL, GOT **BUMPED OFF** WORKIN' ON THIS!

I MAY BE DEPRESSED, BUT SUICIDAL I AIN'T!

EVERYONE CONNECTED WITH THIS CAPER IS OFF THEIR NUT!

AN OLD LADY WHO WEARS A DEBORAH HARRY MASK, TWO DAUGHTERS WHO DON'T EVEN GIVE IT A SECOND THOUGHT WHEN A STIFF FLOPS OUT OF A CLOSET...

**CRASH
TINKLE**

...A SNIVELIN' BRUTE OF A SERVANT -- I CAN'T EVEN **START** TO FIGURE HIM OUT... AND JUST FOR ICIN' ON THE CAKE, I'M SUPPOSED TA BE LOOKIN' FOR A TWO-HEADED SON!

I KNOW I TOOK THAT MONEY UNDER FALSE PRETENSES! SO, ONCE I GET FAR ENOUGH AWAY SO THE ADDAMS FAMILY CAN'T TOUCH ME, I'LL SEND THE MONEY BACK!

I DON'T NEED SOMETHIN' ELSE WEARIN' AWAY AT MY CONSCIENCE!

BUT RIGHT NOW I'M HEADIN' FOR THE CHICAGO TRAIN DEPOT...

...SO'S I CAN GRAB MY TICKET OUTTA HERE!

BUT WOULDN'T YA
KNOW THAT ALONG
THE WAY SOMETHIN'
WOULD CATCH MY EYE



Who--?

THE LINOLEUM
LIZARD! THAT'S
WHAT DIRK BYRD
HAD WRITTEN ON
HIS NOTE-PAD!



AND THAT MEANS
THIS IS PROBABLY A
CLUE! SOMEHOW THIS
BAR HAS GOTTA WORK
INTO THE CASE!

BUT SO WHAT?
WHAT DO I
CARE? I'M NO
LONGER WORKIN'
ON THIS CAPER!



I'M JUST A
LONE DUCK
HEADIN'
TOWARD
THE TRAIN
STATION!

NAW, WHO AM
I KIDDIN'. MY
CURIOSITY'S
GOT THE BEST'A
ME. I GOTTA
SEE THIS THING
THROUGH.



PEACE,
BROTHER!

STEP RIGHT IN
AND DO YOUR
OWN THING!

"SO FINALLY I
PUSHED MY WAY
INTA THAT
WATERIN' HOLE
ONLY TO GET
ASSAULTED BY
A COUPLE'A
THROWBACK
PSYCHEDELICS...



"IT DIDN'T TAKE MUCH TO GET THIS PLACE SCOOPED! IT WAS A THEME BAR... A PLAYPEN FOR KIDS WHO HADN'T OUTGROWN THE 60'S!

MIGHT AS WELL TAKE A SEAT!

CAN'T SEE WHAT INTERESTED DIRK ABOUT THIS DUMP, BUT MAYBE I'M NOT LOOKIN' IN THE RIGHT PLACES!

THEN, BEFORE I COULD EVEN LIGHT UP A STOGIE

HI THERE! YOU'RE A DUCK, AREN'T YOU? YOU KNOW, I WAS INTO MINORITIES BACK IN THE SIXTIES... BLACKS, INDIANS, LITHUANIANS... BUT I NEVER MADE IT WITH A DUCK!

HUH?

ANYONE EVER TELL YOU YOU'RE CUTE?

YEAH. SEVERAL PEOPLE. MOST OF 'EM IN BELLVUE.

Mmmm...YES... REAL CUTE...

LISTEN, BABE, I'M LOOKIN' FOR A GUY I OWE SOME MONEY TO...A LOTTA MONEY...

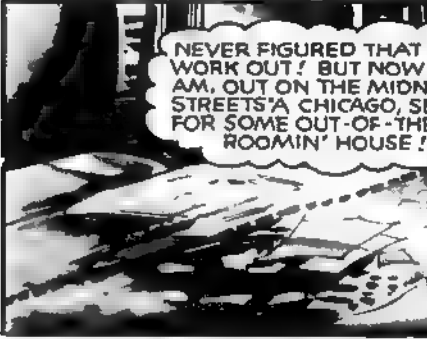
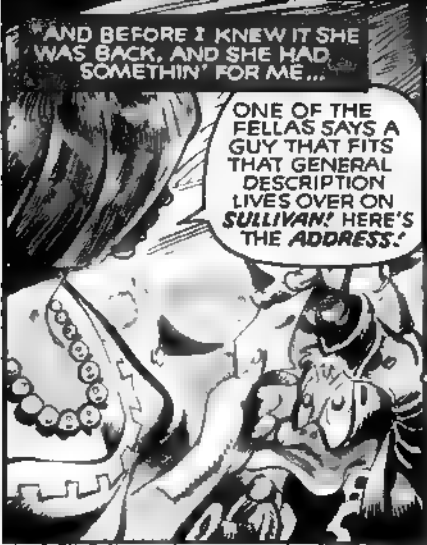
I AIN'T GOT A RECENT PHOTO, BUT THIS IS A PICTURE OF HIM WHEN HE WAS A KID...

YA DON'T HAPPEN TA KNOW HIM, DO YA?

NOPE! NEVER MET HIM MYSELF!

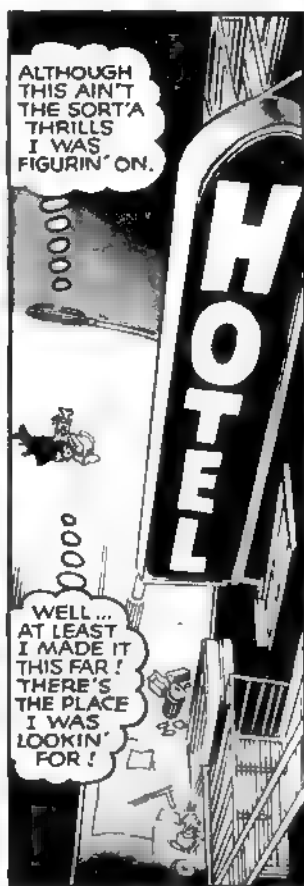
BUT GIVE ME A MIN--MAYBE I CAN FIND SOMEONE ELSE AROUND HERE WHO KNOWS HIM!

Uh... THANKS!





IF I HADN'T BEEN THIN'KIN' LIKE A REAL PRIVATE EYE, I WOULD'VE SHRUGGED IT OFF AS AN ACCIDENT. BUT NOW I FIGURED WHOEVER KNOCKED OFF DIRK BYRD WANTS TA TAKE ME OUTTA THE GAME.







"THEN IT HAPPENED-- HIS
LIT CIGARETTE HIT HIS
OTHER HEAD-- AND BLOOM--
HIS STUPID FACE EXPLODED
'CAUSE ALL IT WAS
WAS A BALLOON."

LET'S SEE WHAT
HAPPENS WHEN I
PUT YER HEADS
TOGETHER! I COULD
USE SOME HELP
FIGURIN' THIS
MESS OUT.

WHY, YOU--

THUNK

UNNGH!



HE LUNGED AT ME AND GOPPED
HIMSELF OUTTA THE GAME.



THINGS ARE STARTIN' TA
ADD UP. THAT LITTLE LADY
BACK AT THE LIZARD
SET ME UP FOR THIS!

ALL SHE AND BALDY HERE
WANTED WERE THE BUCKS
THEY THOUGHT I OWED
SOMEONE !

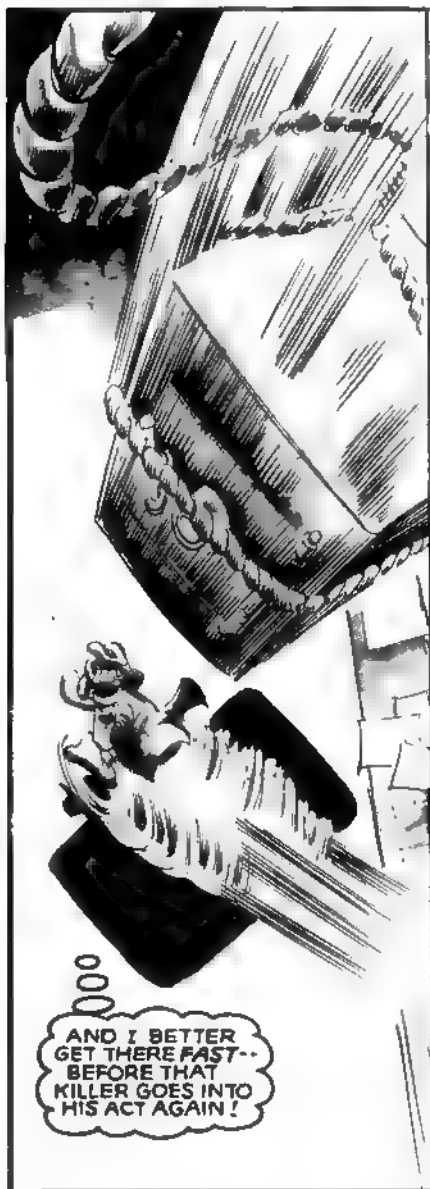
A GUY WITH ONE HEAD
MASQUERADIN' AS A
TWO-HEADED MAN!
SOUNDS SCREWY, BUT...



HEY! WAIT A MINUTE!
IT'S ALL BECOMIN'
CLEAR TA ME NOW. THE
WHOLE CAN'A WORMS
IS COMIN' APART!



NOW I KNEW WHAT HADDA BE DONE!
I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD DO
IT BACK AT THE MANSION!



AND I BETTER
GET THERE FAST--
BEFORE THAT
KILLER GOES INTO
HIS ACT AGAIN!



"I HEARD SOME
THIN' BEHIND ME,
THEN, BUT I DIDN'T
EVEN BOTHER TA
TURN AROUND
AND SEE WHAT IT
WAS. I HAD
PLACES TA GO...

"YA BETTER BELIEVE
THAT IF A DUCK ON FOOT
CAN BREAK THE SOUND
BARRIER, THEN I SET OFF
LOTSA SONIC BOOMS
THAT NIGHT.




THIS IS
IT! TIME
FOR THE
BIG SHOW-
DOWN!



MR. BYRD, WHAT SEEMS TO BE --

ONE SIDE, JEEVES! ROUND UP ALL THE MEMBERS' A THE FAMILY AN' HAVE 'EM MEET ME IN THE OLD LADY'S ROOM. I GOT A LITTLE SOMETHIN' I WANNA TELL 'EM!



"THEY MIGHT'A THOUGHT I WAS PACIN' BACK AND FORTH THINKIN' HARD, STRAININ' MY BRAIN, PUTTIN' ALL THE PIECES TOGETHER AN' TYIN' UP ALL THE LOOSE ENDS...

"... BUT THE MAIN REASON WAS JUST TO KEEP WARM!

I CALLED YA HERE TONIGHT TA INFORM YA THAT I FINALLY FIGURED OUT EXACTLY WHO KILLED DIRK BYRD!

BEGGING YOUR PARDON, SIR, BUT AREN'T YOU DIRK BYRD?

NO, I'M *NOT* DIRK BYRD! AND ONE'A YOU FOUR KNOWS THAT I AIN'T!

DIRK CAME HERE RIGHT AFTER SUSAN CALLED HIM. HE WAS ABOUT TA GET STARTED ON THE CASE... WHEN ONE'A YOU FOUR SHOVED A SHIV IN HIS BACK!

IT COULD'A BEEN EITHER'A YOU TWO GIRLS! YA DIDN'T WANT DIRK TO FIND YOUR BROTHERS!

WHY WOULD YA WANNA SHARE THE INHERITANCE WITH A THIRD AND FOURTH PARTY ALL ROLLED INTO ONE, WHEN, IF HE WASN'T FOUND, YOU'D HAVE IT ALL TO YOURSELVES?

OR, COULD IT HAVE BEEN YOU, MATER DEAR?

WHY? WELL, WHO KNOWS?

MAYBE DIRK LOOKED UNDER YER MASK, AND YA DIDN'T LIKE THE FACT THAT HE DIDN'T LIKE WHAT HE SAW! THAT'S ALL MOOT ANYWAY...

... 'CAUSE THE REAL KILLER IS YOU, JEEVES! AFTER ALL, YA DON'T SEEM TA HAVE A MOTIVE, AND IT'S ALWAYS THE ONE LIKE THAT WHO'S GUILTY IN A CASE LIKE THIS!

JUST LOOK AT HIM! THAT SURLY EXPRESSION... THOSE BEADY, SHIFTY EYES THAT SEEM TA WORK INDEPENDENTLY OF EACH OTHER! THERE'S SOMETHIN' WRONG WITH 'IM-- AND I THINK I KNOW WHAT IT IS!



NO! YOU'RE NOT GONNA PIN THIS ON ME! NOT NOW!

YOU MEAN THE BUTLER DID IT? THE BUTLER ACTUALLY DID IT?

HE'S MAKIN' A BREAK FOR IT!

DON'T WORRY! I'LL STOP HIM!



THAT'S AS FAR AS YOU GO, JEEVES!

OOOMPH! THAT HURT!

YOWCH! I THINK I BROKE MY FACE!

HEY! HE, HE JUST SPOKE WITH TWO SEPARATE VOICES!

NO KIDDIN', SHERLOCK! LEMME SHOW YA WHY!



THERE WAS A REUNION THEN... BUT I WASN'T IN THIS FOR THAT... I WAS HERE TO EXPOSE A KILLER...

MATER!

HINKY, DINKY... I'M SO GLAD...



OH YEAH? WELL, YA WON'T BE GLAD ONCE YA HEAR WHAT ELSE I HAVE TA SAY!

THERE'S A REASON WHY THIS CRUMB OF A SON... OR SONS... WHAT-EVER... WAS DISGUISED AS A BUTLER!



HE DIDN'T WANNA SHARE THE INHERITANCE WITH HIS SISTERS ANY MORE THAN THEY WANTED TO SHARE IT WITH HIM!

HE WAS HERE IN DISGUISE, BIDIN' HIS TIME, WAITIN' FOR HIS CHANCE TA SAFELY BUMP THE GIRLS OFF WITHOUT BEIN' DETECTED!



THEN DIRK BYRD CAME ON THE SCENE--AN' HE GOT TOO CLOSE TO THE TRUTH!

SO, YA HAD TA KILL 'IM, DIDN'T YA?



YES, YES, YOU'RE RIGHT! BUT I DIDN'T DO IT! IT WAS DINKY!

WHAT??

YOU LIE! IT WAS ALL YOUR
IDEA! AND YOU'RE THE ONE
WHO CARRIED IT OUT!

WHY, YOU
FILTHY
FIBBER!



OUTSIDE, THE
POLICE WERE
PULLIN' UP,
JUST AS I
PLANNED...



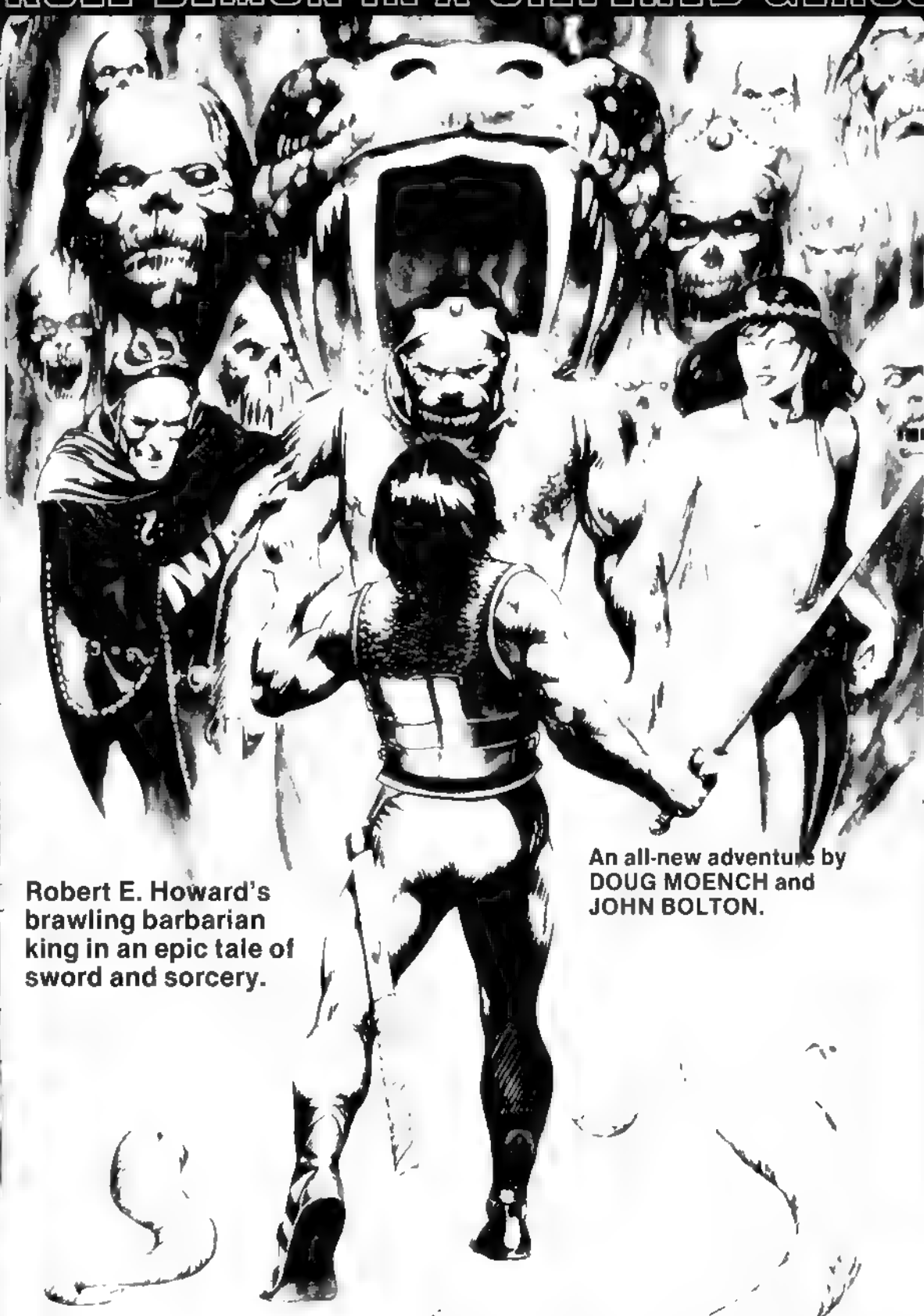
"AND SO--THIS CASE IS CLOSED... AS
THEY SAY ON THE RERUNS. AND MY
CAREER AS A PRIVATE EYE IS OVER."

LET COLUMBO DO THE
SNOOPIN'! IT'S GONNA
TAKE WEEKS FOR MY
NERVES TA GET BACK
TA NORMAL.

MAYBE I CAN FIND
SOME OTHER JOB
HERE IN CHICAGO!

RIGHT NOW,
THOUGH, ALL I
WANT IS TO FIND
MYSELF A ROOM
AND GET MYSELF
SOME SHUT-EYE.

KULL: DEMON IN A SILVERED GLASS

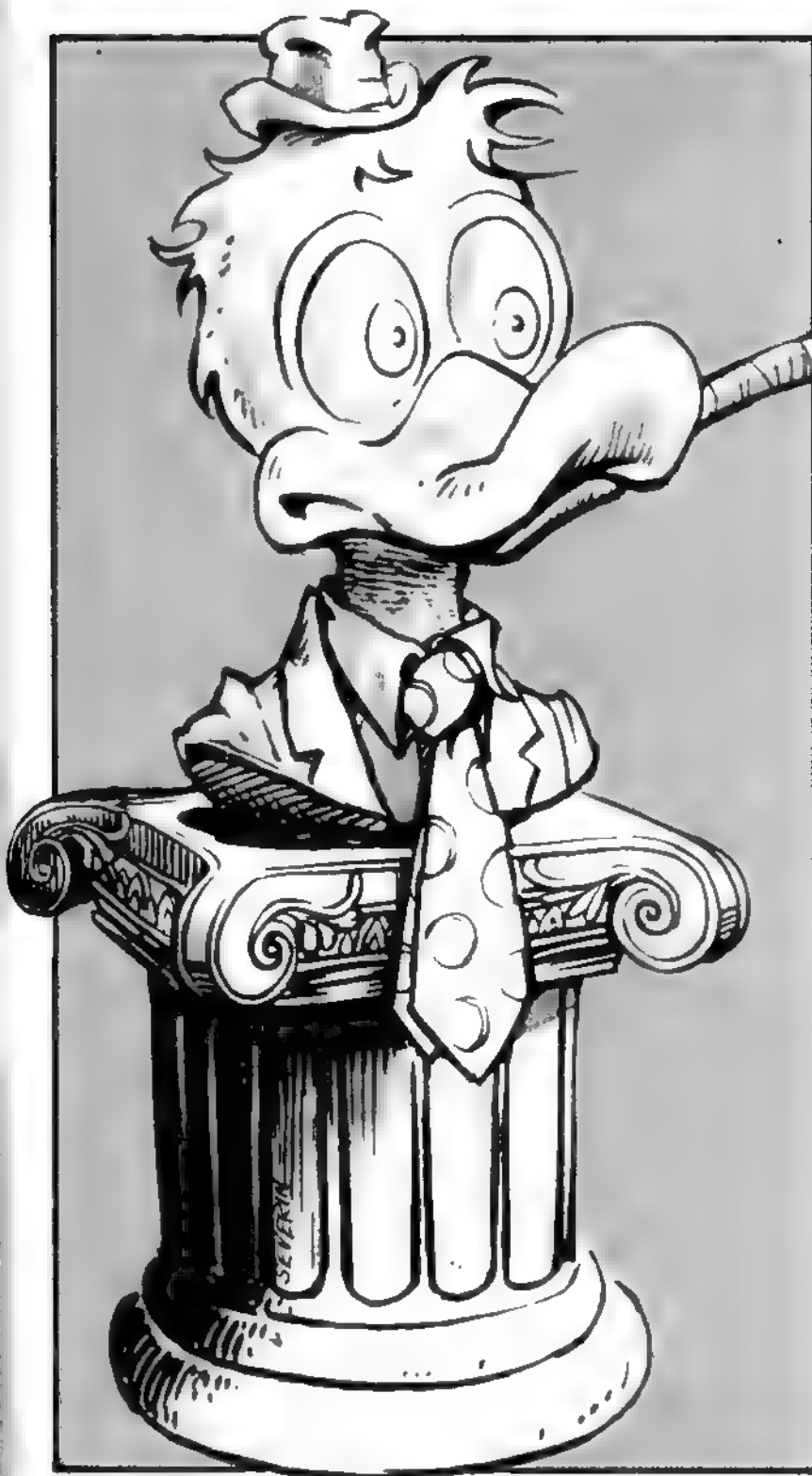


Robert E. Howard's
brawling barbarian
king in an epic tale of
sword and sorcery.

An all-new adventure by
DOUG MOENCH and
JOHN BOLTON.

HOWARD THE DUCK: HOMEWARD BOUND

by STEVEN GRANT



1973 was a good time for Marvel Comics. Before 1971, Marvel Comics had been distributed by Independent News, a firm owned by the same company which owned Marvel's competitor, DC Comics. Because Marvel's comics overwhelmingly outsold DC's wherever they appeared, Independent News therefore put severe restrictions on the numbers of titles and copies Marvel could release. In 1971, Marvel switched to Curtis Circulation Company, and freed from restraint, Marvel began expanding its line and gathering to itself the most inventive minds to enter the comics field in decades. Change and experiment was the motto of the hour. New formats were tested, new ideas tried. Superheroes had, for ten years, been the mainstays of Marvel's growing publishing empire, now the new creators, infused with the excited rebellious spirit of the 60s, were complementing the superheroes with fresh concepts, and expanding Marvel's field of appeal even further than before.

In April of 1970, **CONAN THE BARBARIAN** was published. The first and still the best of the sword and sorcery books, it launched three spin-offs (**SAVAGE TALES**, **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN**, and **KING CONAN**) and inspired a horde of barbarian heroes: Kull The Conqueror, Thongor of Lemuria, Gulliver of Mars, Red Sonja, Solomon Kane, Bran Mak Morn, Warriors Of The Shadow Realm, and many others. **CONAN's** indirect influence allowed many other series to come into being, for it had proven that a non-superhero book can be successful in a traditionally superhero biased medium.

CONAN THE BARBARIAN preceded the horror comic fad by two years, but it shared much of the appeal of the horror comics: dark, mysterious monsters combined with gritty (if fantastic) realism. By 1973, the monsters had arrived, and comic racks were filled with Marvel's horror books: **TOMB OF DRACULA**, **WEREWOLF BY NIGHT**, **FRANKENSTEIN**, **JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY**, **SUPERNATURAL THRILLERS**, **CREATURES ON THE LOOSE**, and others too numerous to mention, including a curious book called **FEAR** which featured a curious character named **THE MAN THING**.

At its core, the idea of the Man Thing was hardly original, it had been around since 1939, when the science fantasy writer, Theodore Sturgeon, penned "*It*," the grisly story of a monster formed in a swamp around the bones of a dead man and becomes a walking, almost indestructible mound of muck. The Man Thing was, at the time, merely the most recent of *It's* literary descendants. He had made his first appearance in the one shot **SAVAGE TALES** published in 1971, Marvel's first abortive attempt at creating comics for an adult audience. Man-Thing was promptly revived and slotted into **FEAR** when that book went from reprint to original material, but throughout the course of several scripts, no one had quite been able to get a handle on the muck monster's character. He was difficult to write, he couldn't think, couldn't speak, shambled a lot, and reacted to other people's emotions rather than taking the initiative. Under most circumstances, a Man



Thing series would be doomed to failure from the word go

Enter Steve Gerber. Gerber was a protégé and former student of then-editor in chief Roy Thomas, and he brought to the scripting of the Man-Thing an intensely personal outlook that changed the course of the series and turned the monster into one of Marvel's best-loved characters. To the point where the book was retired, like a baseball jersey, when he left it. Gerber's Man-Thing was a wild blend of metaphor, fantasy, realism and lunacy.

It never became more lunatic than in FEAR no. 19, the last appearance of the Man-Thing before he was spun off into his own book.

The scene: Thog, the Netherspawn, is attempting to take over the Man-Thing's swamp. In the center of the swamp is the nexus of all realities, a place where all possible worlds become accessible. If in control of the swamp, Thog would destroy the gods and conquer everything. Against him stand Dakimh the Enchanter, The Man-Thing, and Dakimh's apprentice, the earthwoman, Jennifer Kale. Soon they are joined by an extradimensional barbarian swordsman named Korrek, who appears out of a jar of peanut butter. Dakimh waits for one other to join them in their battle against Thog.

It was apparently artist Val Mayerik's idea to have a talking, cigar-chomping, pistol-toting duck walk out of the swamp, having arrived there via a shift in the cosmic axis, and even in a story that nutty, he was a discordant element. The duck — whom we have come to

know as Howard — was a feathered Edward G. Robinson, a web-footed sharpshooter who talked tough, rarely missed, and ran whenever possible.

Gerber seized upon the idea wholeheartedly, and the character remained through the story's continuation in MAN-THING no. 1, where part-way through it the duck went slipping off a stairs in the middle of another dimension and began a long plunge through the space in-between realities.

Mother of mercy! Was that the end of Howard?

Maybe it was the times. Maybe the readers — by then raised on a diet of barbarians, vampires, Martian invaders, futuristic cyborgs, kung fu fighters and swamp monsters — were ready to accept a wise-cracking, cynical, talking duck. Maybe Howard was just the antidote the country needed in an era when even the President of The United States was being toppled from his high office by a trail of lies of corruption.

(Now it can be told the impetus for bringing back Howard The Duck came from a group of fans in Indianapolis, Indiana. The wackiness of Howard moved their irreverent souls — and a write-in campaign was begun, to convince Marvel Comics to rescue the Duck from oblivion. These Indianapolis fans got all this started in their highly acclaimed fanzine, CPL ((Contemporary Pictorial Literature)). And what were the names of these fans? The publisher of CPL was one Bob Layton, the editor a certain Roger Stern. If any one isn't familiar with these names, they ha-

ven't been following IRON MAN, CAPTAIN AMERICA, and DR. STRANGE. Other CPL spawn are a talented artist by the name of John L. Byrne and a sometimes scripter with the unlikely name of Steven Grant.)

To make a long story short, HOWARD THE DUCK returned to Earth in a short feature at the back of GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING no. 4, a story dazzlingly drawn by Frank Brunner. Gerber must have been faced with a dilemma in that early story, the character he had given Howard in his first appearance wouldn't carry a series, and so modifications had to be made. The problem: what would be the proper milieu and character for a talking duck?

If Howard The Duck remains an interesting character today, it's partly due to Gerber's fancy footwork in those early stories. Gerber had an eye for the absurd, and talked of seeing it in everyday life. He had tried to combine that sense of absurdity into the MAN-THING series with mixed — though often dramatic — success. And suddenly Gerber saw Howard The Duck as the key to what he was trying to say in his work. How much more absurd could he get than to take a funny-animal character, plopping it into a world of "hairless apes," and let the character's hard-bitten attitudes and caustic wit loose on a world gone mad? Howard the Duck became Gerber's mouthpiece, his alter-ego — and the soundtrack for the Duck's adventures was a long, dismayed scream.

In revamping his brainchild, Gerber abandoned the Edward G. Robinson persona

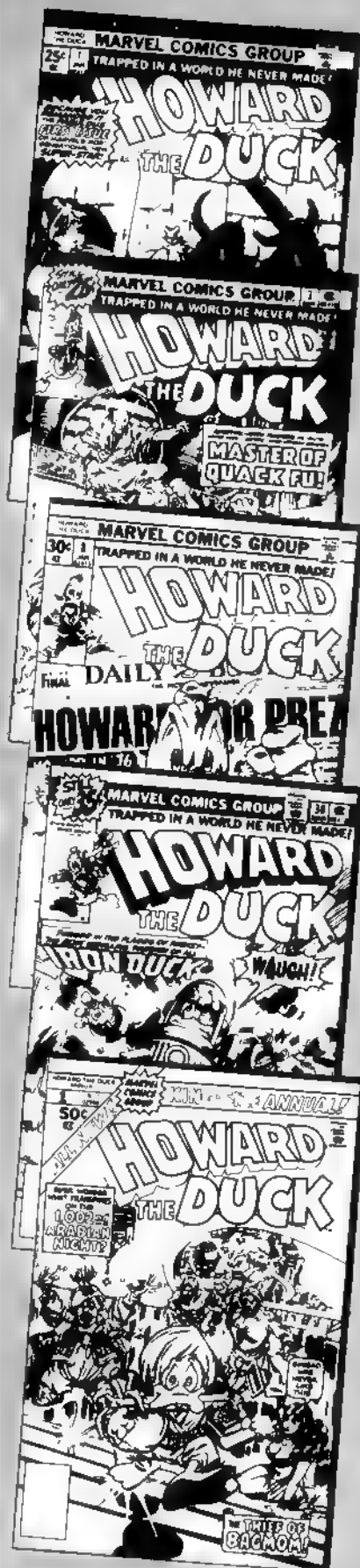


for something closer to Woody Allen and, in the best tradition of Spider-Man and The Hulk, made the duck into a lonely outsider. The difference was that the Hulk might be green and ugly, Spider-Man might be misunderstood, but Howard was a complete and utter outsider, in the fullest sense of the word. A short, unheroic figure in the company of musclebound monsters and heroes that looked like Greek (or Norse) gods, Howard stood apart from the rest of the Marvel characters. His motto was self preservation, and, as opposed to superheroic altruism, his reaction to trouble was to (pardon the pun) duck — and he commonly coped with his problems by running away from them.

It didn't matter. Problems came looking for Howard. His enemies were numerous: a vampire cow, a mad accountant, a turnip from the stars, a bag lady, a gingerbread monster, the clean living hordes of Soofi, the conqueror of space called Berserker Joe, and the

malevolent master of science, Dr. Bong. Howard learned the secret fighting arts of quack fu, fought as a barbarian, worked as a clown's foil on a kiddie's TV show, hitchhiked to New York City, ran for President of the United States, had a nervous breakdown, was put in an insane asylum run by Hitler's dentist, was briefly turned into a human, saved the universe, got kidnapped by a circus, and — worst of all — had to live in Cleveland. (An interesting turn of events is Val Mayerik's voluntarily leaving NYC this year to live in — yep! — Cleveland.) He met several Marvel superheroes, including Spider-Man and the Defenders, and even Marvel Comics themselves were savaged, as Howard became weird versions of some of their most popular characters, including Shang-Chi, Dr. Strange, The Son of Satan, and Iron Man.

Then there were Howard's friends: the lovely Beverly Switzer, a go-go dancer who was Howard's longtime companion before



she was captured by Dr. Bong, who made her his wife, Arthur Winslow, a pulp writer, Paul Same, an unappreciated artist whose subconscious drove him to become Winky-Man, the nocturnal, candle-toting guardian of decency; Winda Wester, a child-woman with mind power beyond belief and a lisp like Elmer Fudd, and the other Beverly Switzler, Bev's identically-named uncle. They were some small comfort to Howard, but to Gerber, their acceptance of Howard was just another example of life's absurdities (and, perhaps, his one nod to the goodness of humanity).

Throughout his run of **HOWARD THE DUCK**, Steve Gerber — aided by the art of Frank Brunner, John Buscema, Gene Colan, Carmine Infantino and Val Mayerick — wielded his pen like a scalpel, and there were few subjects that didn't fall to his satirical blade. He aimed high. He aimed low. He shot from the hip and sometimes missed, but his eye for absurdity and his ability to portray it made **HOWARD THE DUCK** one of Marvel's best loved, most topical books. He tackled kung fu movies, modern art, championship wrestling, permissiveness, repression, politics, nationalism, mental illness, religious cults, horror movies, relationships, neighborhood associations, campaigners for decency, science fiction movies, media, social rejects, high society, love, the law, charities — and even the workings of his own mind. Quite an impressive number of topics for a mere 28 issues.

Toward the end of the run, Gerber must have felt the strain, for the tone abruptly changed from sarcasm to bitterness, and the duck became paranoid instead of estranged. After five years of writing **HOWARD THE DUCK**, Gerber left the book, the daily comic strip based on the book, and Marvel, and moved to California, where he began writing and serving as story editor on several Saturday morning cartoon shows. Curiously, his last story for Marvel was a funny animal story, written under the anagram of Reg Everbest.

Though Gerber's relationship with Marvel has been stormy since his departure, he is still held in high esteem among writers and readers, and no less an authority than editor-in-chief Jim Shooter had this to say about Gerber in a recent interview:

"I think Gerber felt the whole world was nuts and he was able to attack everyone equally, and I think that's a terrific talent Gerber has. I think it's awfully hard to replace, and I don't mind admitting it. That's a tough act to follow."

Things must change, and by 1979, Marvel had lasted through a slump in the economy and was entering another period of experiment. On the agenda was the improvement of the black and-white magazine line, which had mostly housed monster magazines since its inception. The editorial staff wanted to open the magazines to more adult material. **THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN** was retained, as was the experimentally oriented **MARVEL PREVIEW** (now **BIZARRE ADVENTURES**). **THE HULK**' magazine was revamped to allow more sophisticated stories. And when eyes cast about for a feature pres-

ent in the color comics that would fit the new magazine line, the obvious choice was **HOWARD THE DUCK**.

With the advent of longtime Marvel scripter, Bill Mantlo, on **HOWARD THE DUCK**, the tone of the strip changed. The humor became more and yet less outrageous than in the Gerber version, and Howard started to mellow out as Beverly escaped the clutches of Dr. Bong and returned to him Braver, more eager to fit into the world he never made. Mantlo's Howard nonetheless kept his sense of moral outrage, taking on joggers, Italian movie producers, nuclear power plants, Santa Claus, recent American history, Playboy magazine, Dashiell Hammett, TV talk shows, consumerism, Monopoly games, Dracula, superpatriotism, the nuclear family, retirement homes, and famous comicbook heroes.



The art, stunning at the worst of times, was given diverse treatment in the magazine format, as superstars like Mike Golden and Marshall Rogers tried their hands at the duck, while Gene Colan remained Howard's primary artist. Editor Lynn Graeme instituted new features, such as the pin-up pages drawn by greats like John Byrne and Walt Simonson, and by comicbook artists unfamiliar to most readers, such as the popular fan artist, Dave Sim, and the highly acclaimed underground cartoonist, Trina Robbins. Graeme experimented with the format, going so far as to test the impact of a collage cover, in **HOWARD THE DUCK** no. 4. The eclectic, unpredictable **STREET PEEPLE**, part social commentary and part sixties nostalgia, became HTD's back up feature with issue 6. Drawn by cartoonist Ned Sonntag and written by Lynn Graeme, **STREET PEEPLE** pushed as far in-

to non-superhero stories as any Marvel feature had ever gone

Meanwhile, Mantlo was having glorious fun with Marvel concepts, and he invested his stories with the weirdest, funniest assortment of costumed villains ever seen in comics. Mr. Chicken, Jackpot, The One-Armed Bandit, The Chair-Thing, Greedy Killerwatt, The Pinball Lizard, and The Grey Panther. Bev and Howard went to Howard's homeworld, only to discover that his original disappearance had made him the object of a widespread religious cult. Most recently, Bev and Howard made the big split and Howard went out to face life alone.

Suddenly, HOWARD THE DUCK fell to pieces.

It came not with a bang, nor with a whimper, but with a series of independent events that coincided. Mantlo—who had planned the duck's career to the point that Howard would become a successful TV star overnight, plummet out of popularity overnight, end up as an attraction at the Los An-

geles zoo, and then be reunited with Bev—leading to a wedding—left the series due to a variety of reasons.

It was waiting to be picked up when the black-and-white department was hurled into a series of projects. They had received the assignment to put together a slick, color magazine called MARVEL UNIVERSE—and the book began to eat away at editorial time. Then Lynn Graeme and Ralph Macchio were called upon to oversee the creation of comics albums, all new material packaged in book form. The frequency of the experimental title, BIZARRE ADVENTURES, had been increased from quarterly to bi-monthly, and, at the same time, Graeme was breaking in a new creative team on THE HULK magazine.

With time at a premium, something had to give—and the book that gave first was HOWARD THE DUCK. Without a regular scripter it was the book that required the most work and was the most vulnerable title on the black-and-white roster.

Originally, the plan was to keep HOW-

ARD THE DUCK by making it a quarterly publication. But editorial wisdom ruled against a quarterly, traditionally, quarterlies had not done particularly well, and such a move seemed like a slap in the face for a book as loved as HOWARD THE DUCK. And not doing something would put an incredible strain on Graeme's and Macchio's schedules.

There was only one option: stop publication of the HOWARD THE DUCK magazine.

It might appear that the story of Howard The Duck ends here, but the intention was not to kill off the unique fowl! All that was needed was to remove it from the black-and-white stable.

And so, within a few months, Howard returns to the format that hatched him, the color comicbook. The editorial teams and creative talents that will handle his future have not been chosen, but the move to color is no backslide for Howard.

The duck trapped in a world he never made is going home.



Wise Quacks

Since this is the last issue of the HOWARD THE DUCK magazine, Bill and I wanted to print as many of your letters as possible, along with some of the artwork you've been sending in. If your letter or drawing is not included, we hope you'll understand. HOWARD readers are a highly responsive group, and we had to cut here and there. Be sure and look for the first issue of the all new HOWARD THE DUCK color comic book!

Lynn

DUCKWORLD

Dear Duckers,

I simply could not let HOWARD THE DUCK #6 pass without a response (Actually, I probably could have but what the hell, I wanna be heard)

"Duckworld" I do not know what to make of this story. Was it actually an epic satire of Swiftian proportions, lampooning just about every cliché in the media, life, and even (gasp!) the comics? Was it perhaps another "Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court"?

Or was it simply the product of a drug-wasted comic writer's subconscious laboring over a typewriter with the "A" key sticking at three in the morning?

No matter what history makes of this tale, it had me rolling on the floor, convulsed with mirth. Keep it up, Mantlo, and this mag just might continue to be worth my hard-earned buck twenty-five (plus seven cents tax). Howard is funnier than drifting volcano ash.

Danny Barer
516 Palouse
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Dear Bill, Mike, Bob, Lynn and Company,

Nothing (well, almost nothing) is as good to watch (or read) as a well thought-out venting of a writer's anger. Anger is the natural emotion of an emancipated artist, without which he becomes merely another sheep in the fold. Works of literature dealing with anger have become classics, i.e., Swift's "A Modest Proposal", Twain's "A Pan Warmed Up in Hell", the film "Network", and HOWARD THE DUCK #6.

Anger permeated the story Howard's anger at the conspiracy to make him a god, Gander's anger at How-

ard's return, even Bev was mad as hell (No panel in Marvel history had more anger in it than panel 2 on page 48!) There was even a venting of personal anger, as seen in the swipes Marvel took at the Disney conglomerate. The entire issue, the best in HTD history, felt as good as punching out Khomeni!

Alan McHugh
207 Hall Street
Greenville, TN 37743

Dear Bill, Michael, and Bob

Words cannot describe HOWARD THE DUCK #6. It was perfect in every way I especially liked those touches that made Duckworld Duckworld. The comic books on page 10 (Spider-Duck, the X Ducks), the U.S. dollar bill on page 11, Duxon and Gyro, the Microducks and the Rom-Duck toy, the TV Guide with Lou Quant on the cover, Snaihen ("In Space No One Can Hear You Waugh"), Ducktor Strange — Mailard of the Mystic Arts, and, last but not least, Uncle Scrounge MacDrake.

All of it was absolutely terrific!

Ernest Tomkiewicz
80 Kristen Lane
Wareham, MA 02521

Dear Bill, Michael and Bob,

Re HOWARD THE DUCK #6

One word could describe this issue. Great! But that alone doesn't really tell much, like what was good or bad about it. I'm going to take apart HTD #6, if you'll allow me.

(1) The cover: I guess this part of the letter should be addressed to John Pound. It was the best HTD cover yet. It had just the right amount of "cartoonishness." Admit it Howard (and all other ducks and drakes from a certain other company that shall remain nameless) is a cartoon character. The cover caught the contrast between

Howard's duckness and Bev's humanness perfectly.

(2) The dialogue and layout of the opening sequence: I enjoyed the obvious similarities between this and the opening sequence of "Frog Death" from GIANT SIZE MAN-THING #4. But, suddenly, it seemed to fall apart. Just as you copied the layout exactly, so, too, should you have copied the dialogue. But I guess you had to allow for variations. While I understand what you were attempting to convey by duplicating that sequence (the contrast between Howard's arrival on Earth and his return to Duckworld) I thought you were too faithful to the original. In not varying more than you did, you more or less gave us the same sequence twice. I only found it funny the first time.

(3) I'm going to list some words and names. Tell me what they have in common. Beaker Street, Spider Duck, X-Ducks, Powerduck, Old Crow, New Stork, Morty Fowler, Booker T. Wackerton, Reverend Gander, Truman Capoultry, Wackies, Mayor Quack, Duckhattan, Richard Millnest Duxon, Johnny Quackson, Ed MacDrake, Microducks, Ludwig Von Cluck, Bat-Duck, Scrounge MacDrake, Ducktor Strange. Geez! Talk about fowl language! First of all, if you must have some kind of fowl reference in every proper name (which you don't) certain ones should have been altered. Given that the male of the species is a drake, some of the names should have read Spider Drake, Powerdrake, X-Drakes, etc. (because here on Earth we don't say Powerwoman or X-Females (although maybe we should give the second (sic) sex their due)) Okay! Enough grammar for today!

Secondly, here on Earth our names do not usually denote our race, like Stan Human, Irving Man, etc., as names seem to do on Duckworld (I'm sure Manhattan is merely a coincidence). It was funny with one or two names (Truman Capoultry was a good one) but it got out of hand.

(4) The art contained as many funny bits as the dialogue. The drake with the cigar, the two drakes fighting over Howard's cap, even the dog pulling at Howard's tie. I loved it!

(5) The "Ducktor Strange" idea was okay. I didn't like his being a wmo or having hair and a moustache, but it was good for laughs.

(6) I don't believe it! I never thought you'd do it! I never thought you could do it! A takeoff of U---E---E! Wait 'til your friends at W---T-D-Y S---S here about this!

(7) Last but not least, to all readers whose letters appeared in the "Con" section of Wise Quacks commenting unfavorably on Bill's antinuclear Christmas story in HTD #3. C'mon! What do you expect? "A Christmas for Carol" was strictly satire, and satire is supposed to be what this mag is about. I'm sure that Bill wasn't implying that nuclear power is altogether bad, but simply that Greedy Killerwatt was using it for evil

purposes, and that that was a situation that could cause a disaster.

Jim Johnson
19209 Auburndale
Livonia, MI 48152

Dear (Duck)Bill Mantlo,

HOWARD THE DUCK #6 is, without argument, the greatest issue yet!

Other artists have drawn better hairless apes than Michael Golden, but when it comes to delineating ducks, he has no equal (not even the great Carl Barks). His renditions of Howard, the Rev. Godfrey Gander, Uncle Scrounge MacDrake, Gyro Agnu and Richard Millnest Duxon were excellent, and the Microducks were too good to be true.

But the credit for this issue must be shared with the man who made it all possible: You, Bill! Your story was terrific. You seem to have gotten rid of your Gerber fixation, stinging us with your own barbed wit (Quent State was funny and chilling at the same time, even though it seemed to go against what had been established in the previous issue's "Playduck Interview"). The most memorable of your characters in this issue was the Reverend Godfrey Gander, the perfect parody of (I hope) the real-life Rev. Ernest Angely, evangelist.

Which brings me to another point. Send Howard and Bev back to Duckworld and keep them there permanently!!

Scott Roberts
1446 94th Ave.
Kenosha, WI 53142

Dear Bill,

You seem to have gotten a lot of letters from those who have found the nudity in HOWARD THE DUCK offensive. While I didn't personally like the nudity in HTD #1 (it struck me as a sophomoric, "Hey, look at what we can get away with in a black-and-white mag") I do feel that, when it is valid for story reasons, nudity should be used naturally. I'm not implying that you run nude centerfolds of Bev (although that's not such a bad idea) merely that, when you feel you need to present nudity in this magazine, you do it as naturally and tastefully as possible, without the "peekaboo" attitude so prevalent in men's magazines which just implies that being naked is somehow bad.

Now, about HOWARD THE DUCK #6. Brilliant! You, Mr. Mantlo, are a writer! I know of no higher praise. The Duxon/Quent State sequence alone was worth my buck and a quarter. Bev's reactions to Duckworld were also classic.

Other good stuff. The replay of HTD #1's opening scene. The dog. The bit of stolen Bowie ("Crowd control to Major Tom"). The supporting cast of "Superman". The WACKIES speaking Stannish. The very concept of Truman Capoultry (did Truman Capote know he was being so satirized?) The whole "Tonight Show" spoof. The audience's reaction to

Bev, The Microducks, The DC Comics in the trash, while Marvel's Duck world parallels were neatly stacked on racks. Mumble Comics Scrounge MacDrake (Boy, is that "certain company" gonna be muffed?) Harvey the Ape Ducktor Strange's rationale for sending Howard and Bev back to Earth. Capoultry's loyalty. And Bev's last line on page 54.

What else is there to say but MAKE MINE MARVEL!TM

Jon Sheen
36 Center Road
Shirley, MA 01464

Dear Duckaholics,

Howard did not wear pants on Duckworld originally. Hatched with gloves on? [Uh, they're put on immediately after birth? —Lynn] The coins in Howard's hand read "Dixon" whereas, everywhere else, he's called Duxon. The wall poster in that alleyway should have read "Sexy Ducks", not "Sexy Girls". Loved that comic book rack and "In Space No One Can Hear You Waugh". "Harvey the Ape"? Excellent, Bill! I read the mag three times before I saw him on the last page. MAN-THING!

Last but not least. Howard got mad! That photo album! Ducktor Strange!

Dave Toth
6150 S. Monroe Drive
Littleton, CO 80121

I'm gonna break my silence here (I do so love watching you folks argue amongst yourselves) to give credit where credit is due. HOWARD THE DUCK #6, while one of the most tightly-plotted tales I have ever written, benefitted enormously from the artistic and conceptual contributions of master illustrator Michael Golden. Many of the background touches and jokes were pure Michael. Others, especially when it came to creating characters, were a joint creative effort between Michael and myself. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Michael for the time and effort and, yes, love he put into what I believe to be the most important issue of HOWARD THE DUCK to be published since Howard's first appearance in color comics. Bob McLeod's inking was incredible — glowing and luscious. Thank you, Michael and Bob. It was a pleasure.

—Bill Mantlo

Dear Mantlo,

I was halfway through HOWARD THE DUCK #6 when I had to grab a piece of paper and dash off an enraged letter to you. With each succeeding issue I've been shaking my head and screaming louder and louder, "No! No! No!" This is it. I have to vent my anger!

Mantlo, you don't understand Howard at all. I mean, I can buy your disclaimer that you're not Steve Gerber, but something else is missing. It's your writing. Let's face it: HTD #6 has a 17-page plot masquerading as a 51-page story. And it's not just this issue. It's been the case with

every issue since HTD became a magazine.

But "stretching" isn't the only problem. You're writing on the level of *Mad Magazine* when you should be emulating *National Lampoon*. Your Howard lacks sophistication and reads more like a comic book than when HTD was a comic book. Big deal, so you show nudity. So far it's been infantile. If you're writing this mag for mature audiences, how about giving us some mature writing?

Already you've done your best to destroy the entire concept of HTD. Earth is a world he never made. He was above it all. He was an observer. He could laugh at us and yet be tainted by our customs, institutions and mores. He was noble and trying to cope in a topsy-turvy world. Everything you've done this past year has gone towards destroying that. Your integrating Howard into our society in HTD #6 was the final nail in the coffin. You've destroyed Howard's Utopia. Duckworld was his last refuge, the measuring stick by which he judged us. Howard may still look like a duck, but you've got him acting no differently than a hairless ape, and that not only destroys the premise of this strip, but Howard's very reason for existing. You might just as well put him to sleep rather than turn him into just another funny animal character.

The sad part of it is that I can't think of another writer at Marvel who can handle this strip, and that's bad. If you can't do it, who can?

Dan Petras
6 Edson Street
Hyde Park, MA 02136

I seriously doubt that anyone ever took seriously Howard's referring to Duckworld as a Utopia (in fact, I doubt that he ever referred to it as such himself). That is just not very realistic or very mature, Dan. I treated Duckworld as I thought it must be; a world not so very different from ours in which Howard was as much a prisoner as he is here on Earth. You see, I firmly believe that Howard is an outcast no matter where he finds himself. Giving such a character a world to which he can relate, and which can relate to him, seems neither very believable or very interesting. Howard is too irascible, too angry, too opinionated, and too smart to even countenance the idea of a "perfect world." And even were he to one day find one, I seriously doubt whether his nature would allow him to stay there.

—Bill Mantlo
I agree — and that realization (that there is no perfect world) is one of the marks of maturity.

Lynn

Dear Bill and other Duck People,

It seems I've done it again. No sooner do I get off a massive declaring my preference for Gerber's Duck than Bill Mantlo comes up with a tour-de-force that makes me ashamed. Apologies are most sincerely tendered. The "Duckworld" story ranks among the best. One last word: May the sun ever shine upon your face, Bill, for the first page of Chapter Two where that security guard carries on his walkie-talkie conversation. You done good, fella!

Thomas Kaib
4411 Alan Drive
Baltimore, MD 21229

Concerning the "Duckworld" story by Mantlo and Golden: Far F----- Out! You guys outdid last issue (which I thought was great). Please keep Mike Golden (under any conditions).

And as to doing parodies, please do. This seems exactly what Howard was made for.

John J. Lewandowski
456 Central Ave.
North Jersey, NJ 07307

If we have anything to say about it, you'll be seeing a lot more of Michael Golden, although probably not in Howard, which will continue to be drawn, in the main, by Gene Colan. Michael is creating a new character for us, *Lady Daemon*, who will appear in *BIZARRE ADVENTURES* #25.

—Lynn

Dear Mr. Mantlo,

I'll get right to the point. I hereby apologize for what I said a couple of years (ago) concerning your inability to write Howard the Duck.

First of all, if you made T(h)e M(ad) Maple mad, not to mention doing the same to some other people with issue 3, you're ok in my book.

In addition, HTD #6 was classic! The original Howard stories gave me the illusion of an old dude — er, duck. Keep it up and keep him young.

My only complaint — and you had nothing to do with this — concerned the *True Detective*-esque cover. As Dale Sherman remarked, some of the earlier ones have been childish, so maybe now Marvel will give us some more covers.

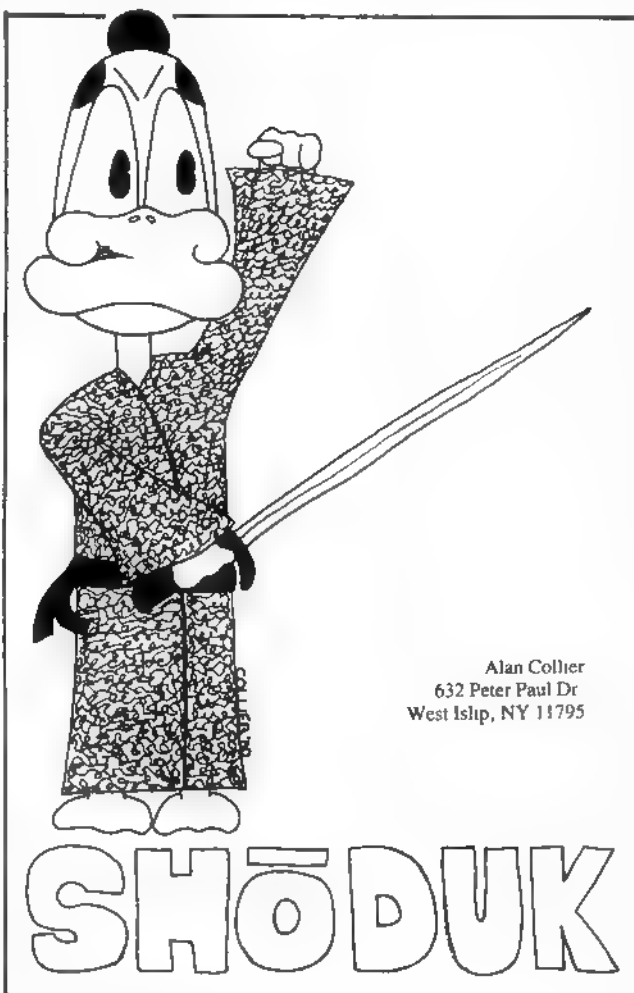
So, get down!

gln
address withheld

Dear Drakes,

I eagerly take my pencil in hand to tell you that I am mere inches away from a No-Prize! In HTD #6, inside front cover, you tell the origin of Howie. Well, you say there, and I quote: "And, after a period floating in unspace, dropping him to a painful one-point landing in — of all places Cleveland!"

Surprise! Howie, after the Cosmic Axis shifted, landed in the Everglades! Other than this minor flaw, this issue was hilarious! Especially



Alan Collier
632 Peter Paul Dr
West Islip, NY 11795

the "Microducks!" Give my regards to Bill Mantlo!

Sam Roberts
Wine Rd
New Brantree, MO 01531

Sheesh! If there's anything worse than a gloating nit-picker, it's a gloating nit-picker who's obviously, totally, and hideously right! Congratulations on your special (all deluxe version) of our inimitable No-Prize.

— Lynn

Dear Editor,

Despite my disagreements with some of Bill Mantlo's work and stances, I do generally find his writing to be quite good (and my criticism is never leveled against you with any sense of bitterness, Bill) "Duckworld" was an example of one of his better efforts. Sure it was a little excessive in places (just once, I'd like to see a genuinely honest and devout evangelist portrayed in a comic book) and there were some great coincidences (Duck-Stranger being in that alley, for instance) but Bill had a good theme and he stuck to it. All of us live in a world we never made and it's sometimes tough to accept that. (Though I would like Bill to write a story emphasizing the obverse issue — that we all make a small part of the world we live in.)

Yours truly,
"T M Maple"

Dear Waterfowl,

I've been with Howard since issue #1 of his comic, but this is the first time I've actually sat down to write you folks a letter concerning him. As you may have guessed, the event that finally prompted (me to) do so was Howie's return home in issue #6, "Duckworld." This story was a piece of art! What satire! What irony! What looniness! I especially liked Truman Capoultry.

All in all, "Duckworld" and issue #6 itself were good. But now it's time for the gripes. First, the cover. Still too cartoonish — but getting better. Why not try one of those airbrushings that adorned the covers of the old CO-NAN and PLANET OF THE APES?

Stop drawing Beverly in skimpy rags and so forth. I don't like my hormones played with. (Either show it or don't show it.) And while we're on the subject of clothes, get the pants off Howard!

Brian Maas
2001 Stone Hollow Ct
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013

Golly Wow, Brian! First you want Beverly covered up and then Howie stripped down! Now, if you read issue #8, you now know as much about the Great Pants Controversy as we: that article is not toned down, or filled with half-truths. Those are the facts as we know them. However, some of us feel that having Howard wear pants makes more sense than having him without them: they are part of his "disguise" in a hairless ape world. As for Beverly... I've had — discussions, shall we say? — with some ar-

tists who protest that showing the human body nude is natural and beautiful. Okay. So why don't we have the extremes of nudity that applies to females being applied to male characters? Even in the barbarian books, the hero is never without his modest little loincloth, while the slave-girls, etc., are lucky to get a pair of earrings.

— Lynn

Mssrs. Bill Mantlo, Michael Golden, and Bob McLeod

Congratulations on both HTD nos 5 and 6! I have enjoyed both, cover to cover! The Fredericks collage is just delicious, and Pound's very voluptuous physical modelling an appropriate follow-up to his earlier cover on no. 4 (Special note, of course, of the foreground duck in the sailor suit!) The anonymous (at least I can discover no credit) but by-the-style-of-it Golden inside cover to no. 5 was an appreciated added bonus. One of the things I especially appreciated about the artwork in these issues was the little detail bits, like the Frisbee stuck on the roof on p. 18 of no. 5. The unusual (first-time ever?) making effects in no. 6 also deserve high praise — the use of white-outs to indicate klieg lighting, and the drawing-over photo effects of New Stork streets (note the Howard Johnson's, of course!).

As for the scripting, I enjoyed the Drakula story thoroughly, as a romp. The big Duckworld story, I thought, succeeded well, trying like the "Christmas for Carol" story to mix fun with serious business, but bringing the mix off much more convincingly, the Christmas plot lurched. This one hung together. Also, Three Mile Island has nothing to do with Christmas (as far as my personal poetic vision reaches), but Kent State had a not-for-gotten 10th anniversary this May, when no. 6 was due to reach the stands.

Captain Americana was just a pure downer, to me. Sorry. No fun & just ugliness. Also no serious statement that I could discern. Maybe it was felt to be needed as a push-off to Duckworld. Still struck me as out of joint.

Street People is another story, entirely, a kind of counter to Zap comix, perhaps. What it's doing in HTD, I can't imagine, but it's good so far in its own right and I suppose you didn't know where else to put it. Good luck!

Since HTD is now too high class for bubble gum and war toy advertising, how about a l'art pour l'art poke of fun in the direction of such advertising in other Marvel mags?

Truman Capoultry is a fine creation! The interview in no. 4 was a treat, and it was nice to see him back again in no. 6. My guess is that your readership is, at least in large percentage, "literary," and will enjoy such allusions.

The scene buying the cigars with Earth money on Duckworld was a nice switch to those of us lucky enough to possess GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING no. 4 in which Howard tried the reverse upon first landing in

Cleveland! An opportunity was missed, though, to draw ducky counterparts to either well-known Marvel titles or "Sidney" ones on the rack in the cigar store!

My one objection to the Duckworld plot. Maybe I'm just too old and faithful a Disney fan, but I can't imagine an Uncle Scrooge looking that much like good old Unca Scrooge and being evil — his features would have had to have been altered more (and we'd still recognize the intended play) to make him believably evil!

All in all, difficult jobs outstandingly well done!!! Your adulating fans will return to bug their newsstand dealers all July until no. 7 is forthcoming!

THANK YOU!

Stephen Eberhart
806 Stoddard Street
Missoula, MT 59801

Dear Lynn Graeme and Bill Mantlo,

This is a two-part letter of comment on Howard the Duck in general and HOWARD THE DUCK #6 specifically. The general comments follow first.

Actually, I'm writing to comment on a particular aspect of Howard the Duck which has garnered a bit of comment since HOWARD THE DUCK's first issue, and which bids fair to developing into a real controversy. This is Howard's and Beverly's personal relationship with each other.

During their sojourn in the four-co-

lour comic Howard's and Beverly's relationship was never overtly or even covertly sexual. Whether or not this was intentional on Steve Gerber's part I don't know. In fact, during his stint as a presidential candidate, Howard repudiated claims that there was anything between him and Beverly other than simple friendship. "Fake! Of course, it's fake! Bev and I never bathe together. She hates the smell of wet feathers!" (Howard's comments on the damaging newspaper photo of the Bathtub Scandal).

With the move from the Comics Code Authority-controlled four-colours to the non-Code black and whites, you've become more explicit about the intimacy between our hero and his lady. You've also become the target for those people who feel that such intimacy is immoral or, at best, unnatural. People like the Smister Soofi, the Kidney Lady, and the crowds of ducks on Duckworld (HOWARD THE DUCK #6 pages 38 and 44) have represented this opinion in the Marvelverse(s).

"Interspecies cohabitation? Bestiality? Crossbreeding? Can it be done?" (HTD 6, p. 38) Harsh, but is it valid?

This isn't the first time Marvel has explored the idea of sexual liaisons between members of two alien races. I cite the love shared between Professor Charles Xavier of Terra and the Empress Lilandra of the Shi'ar, the one of simian descent, the other of avian stock. In essence we have Howard

SO... LYNN — WHEN'RE YOU
GOING TO GET CLYDE CALDWELL
TO DO A COVER FOR H.T.D.?



ONLY THE SHADUCK KNOWS!

(Submitted by — heh, heh — Clyde Caldwell!)

over again save that Professor X plays the role of hairless ape. Yet there have been no cries from fandom about the unnaturalness of this union. Perhaps because, for all her alienness, Lilandra possesses a humanoid form.

CONAN THE BARBARIAN and Marvel's other fantasy magazines abound with hybrid beings that resulted from mortals having intercourse with demonkind; Prince Namor is Marvel's oldest example of the love that can exist between two people of different races.

Science Fiction has long and often explored the possibilities and ramifications of inter-species intercourse. Fritz Leiber's *The Wanderer* has a man making love to a humanoid female of a feline race; she later expressed loathing at what her people would consider an act of sodomy. Philip Jose Farmer, in his novelet, "My Sister's Brother" (*The Book of Philip Jose Farmer*, DAW Books, 1973), describes the feelings of a Terran astronaut towards a Martian female. Farmer portrays a method of reproduction truly alien to anything the average person could possibly conceive. Yet it was no more unnatural than the means utilized by the octopus. Simply because it is different does not make it unnatural.

"Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death," Exodus 22:19; "Howard's cohabitation with Beverly threatens species survival!" HOWARD THE DUCK #6, page 46. These are the two main reasons why the sexual liaison between Howard and Beverly is condemned, religious/moral and species survival. The fanatics denounce it as contrary to the will of God (or the Great Drake, depending on which world you're on), the eugenicists fear the supremacy of the human/duck races will be overturned by a hybrid form of the two species.

Any man or woman who has sexual intercourse with a beast is damned; is Howard a beast? True, he is of duck descent, just as we are of simian origin. Yet, Howard is as likely to plan the seduction of a mallard as any one of us will want to score with a gorilla. He is an intelligent being. The product of millennia of evolution on Duckworld, and has more in common with us hairless apes than with any earthly fowl. "And God said, Let us make man in our image..." Genesis 1:26. Was it any different on Duckworld?

And as for such a relationship being a threat to the human and/or duck species, I hardly think so. With the exception of genetic engineering fusing recombinant DNA, no hybrid forms of human/duck life are possible from Howard and Beverly because (1) Howard and Beverly are genetically mismatched. Howard may have fewer or more genes than Beverly and, unless there is a one to one matchup of genes, no offspring will result. And, (2) Beverly is anatomically-equipped for live birth, not oviparous. Therefore, their liaison has more in common with that of gay couples as far as reproductive capability is concerned.

And since sexual relations between humans and Duckworlders seems to be confined to Howard and Beverly, human- and duckkind need fear nothing.

Now for part two of my letter of comment. I enjoyed HOWARD THE DUCK 6 in regards to story and art, especially when I consider the frightening financial power now being wielded by the Rev. Moon thanks to the contributions of his moonie slaves (you may have to delete that). One of the largest detergent companies, Proctor and Gamble or Lever Bros., has been taken over by the Moonie organization. All their products now have the Moonie sun/moon motif printed on a corner of the package.

Re: Street People. Lynn, it's actually too early for me to say whether or not I like the strip. It is different, I must admit, but I've never let that stop me from liking anything. I think, though, from the first episode that you may have a problem keeping yourself from writing Street People from a 10-years after viewpoint. I think I detected a note or two of this attitude.

Somehow, Street People seems to fit HOWARD THE DUCK. The Sixties were a time of innocent idealism and doing-your-own-thing (as long as nobody got hurt) which, I think Howard himself believes. However, only Moonchild appears to be in tune with these ideas. Cheyanne and Qwami, especially Cheyanne, seem to represent the future Seventies Me Generation. More episodes are required before a fair judgement can be passed.

Yours Sincerely,
Gregg Chamberlain
General Delivery
Burns Lake, B.C.
Canada, VOJ JEO.

To the HTD crew (and the Duck):

First, my congratulations on Howard's successful transition to black-and-white. I had my doubts, which were not assuaged by the first issue; but it seems as though things are settling into the new format quite well. HTD is the first pictorial magazine (read "comic book") that I have collected since the early teens and my love affair with Dr. Strange (not literally!), aside from the truly genius-possessed works of the late, great, lamented Vaughn Bode. And I have now collected most of (not all, regretfully) the color HTDs and all the b&w's.

I do have a complaint, though, and this refers to the Street People strip. My opinion is, simply, "Drop it!" Let the much more subtle and infinitely more self-reliant Duck stick it out alone. To put such heavy-handed, counter-cultural humor (which is, in itself, fine) in HTD will no doubt turn off many people who would quite readily continue to rollick along with the Duck. And it is almost insulting to put such types as the brainless, egocentric California Belle and the spineless, effete Riff in the same mag and therefore nearly an equal footing with the tough, his-own-Duck Howard.

Let the Street People have their own place in a more likely "underground" (it's all aboveground, any more) mag. I liked Horsemeat best of all the characters in that strip, anyway. And the sympathomimetically verbose Hipster, Veg-out, second best. This is of course, only one fool's opinion among many; but here it is. I love how sexy Bev is getting; it makes the wildness inherent in her relationship with the Duck that much more jarring. However, leave us not allow her to dwindle into a mere sexual object. She's a tough enough and worldly enough type to stand on her own.

So, here you have the first and no doubt only letter that I will ever write to you "pitcher people." Keep up the good *waugh*!

John Kennard
462 Rose Lane, Apt. 21
Lexington, KS 40508

PS: Why not bring Blinky and the rest of Howard's charming neighbors (including the sexy female duck — what have you all done to me?) over to Apeworld for awhile?

Dear Lynn,

In your editorial to HTD #5, you mentioned that you would like readers' reactions to the cover of that issue. You also mentioned that you had made several bets on the result of that reaction.

I hope the bets were not for very much.

I work at Lone Star Comics here in Arlington. When we got the magazine in, we were, ummm... NOT impressed. But we decided to let our customers have their say. So we laid out the enclosed sheets to let them vote. The results: IT'S GREAT: 2 1/2. NO FEELING: 4, IT STINKS: 38 1/2. Most of our customers age from their late teens to early thirties, just to give you some idea of who was voting. Most are also comic book collectors, as opposed to just readers.

To give you my own opinions about the cover (and these would be shared by most of those on the list), this is the poorest excuse for a comics magazine cover that I have ever seen, and you certainly have had much competition in that area. But the problem is not just with the cover, it's with the thinking that goes on behind the attempting of a cover of this kind. It is the same problem much of "fine arts" has: that of purposeless experimentation. I'll show you what I mean. Take, for instance, artist Joseph Albers, just because he's the first one that comes to mind. He paints all kinds of different designs using a variety of colors. He experiments with colors. Now that's all fine and good; the problem is that it's all terribly meaningless. So he finds out that two colors have some effect when next to each other. That's nice, but who really cares, unless that knowledge gained from experimentation is used for some higher goal?

Now (and I hope I haven't lost you so far) this is what you have done with this cover. You probably wanted to do something different with a different

sort of magazine. Nothing wrong there. But just doing something different isn't enough. It has to be good, too! Doing something different just for the sake of doing something different is a trap a lot of "fine artists" fall into. It's also why so much of that art stinks. So what if an artist can paint while standing on his head in a bathtub of water? If the painting is bad, it's bad. Period.

Think of it this way. If that cover would have been a drawing instead of a collage, would you have flipped over it? Probably not, because it's a horrible drawing. What this artist has done is cover up a poor drawing with a "technique." Oooooohh, now isn't that artsy!

By the way, the issue sold well enough in the store. Fortunately, the cover "art" had no effect on the beautiful Golden and Conan art inside.

HOWARD #6 has since come out. A much better cover, or so the general feeling is down here. Probably the best HTD mag cover to date. Inside is Golden's best Howard effort yet. It is absolutely stunning! And then (choke, gag, cough) we find "Street People."

Now that I've gotten that out of my system, I think I'll sit down and read the issues (I'm way behind in my comic reading).

Craig Miller
2803 Gilbert Circle
Arlington, TX 76010

Gulp!

— Lynn

Dear Friends:

Wow.

In HTD #6, you have simply outdone yourselves.

It's clear, right from the beginning, that Messrs. Mantlo (excellent script), Golden & McLeod (outstanding artwork — A plus!) put a great deal of love, sweat, and tears into the piece. A classic? You bet!!

And the attention to detail is unlike anything I've ever seen. Take the comic book display in the candy store. Right on the top rack is a copy of THE UNCANNY X-DUCKS. With Cyclops on the cover, yet.

And the cigarette ad on the wall [pp. 15-16]. An exact analog of its Terran counterpart, right down to the Surgeon General's health warning!

And on a subtler level, a little poke at your Distinguished Competition thru the people... er, drakes, in the TV crew (page 18) Lana Linn (Lana Lang's counterpart; inside the remote truck, we find the equivalent of Perry White, still trying to get Jimmy Olsen to prevent himself from calling White "Chief"! Funny sequence, right there.

Richard Millnest Duxon at Quent State... a brilliant satire. Could Duxon have gone over the edge after he ordered coinage minted with his likeness on it (last panel, page 26)? Makes you wonder how close we came to seeing Nixon's visage replacing Washington's on a 25¢ piece. Scary. (The first panel on page 28 shows just how attentive you were by transmuting that now-unforgettable photo-

graph into Duckworld terms. In fact, it's so eerily close to its analog, that a quiver went down my spine when I set eyes on it.)

With all this attention to detail, how could you have allowed Johnny Quackson's TV studio to look like one of Mort Drucker's old *Mad Magazine* sendups? Besides, Quackson's show should be based in Los Angeles. (I have two theories for the discrepancy: One, he was making one of his rare, weeklong stays in New York City — something his counterpart hasn't done in ages. Two, DC's Earth-One/Earth-Two theory, which in this case, states that although there are similarities between Earth and Duckworld, there are also differences; hence, Quackson may not yet have made the decision to move his show to the West Coast.)

You have, in this story, formed the basis for what I think would be an intriguing series all by itself: *Tales of Duckworld*, featuring Truman Capoultry. We would follow his travels following the completion of his next book, "The Truth about Howard the Duck." We could see more of the similarities and differences that abound on Duckworld. Think for a minute. How would Duckworld have represented the following to their fellows? Alice, Flo, Vera, and company; Elvis; Mary Hartduck (Mary Hartman's Dickworldian alter ego); Mork & Mindy... the list is as long as your imaginations!

One more thing: I have no doubt that this story (my nominee for Story of the Year) will make the relationship that exists between Bev and Howard just that much more important to both of them. Even if they eventually decide not to, I can't see how Howard could not begin to consider the ideas of proposing marriage to her! You ought to devote an issue to the subject — it'd be worth giving up \$1.25 just to see Bev's reaction when he does. No, wait. Make that if he does. Both. Well, you know what I mean.

Well, until next time.... Get Down!!!

Michael Sanders
Portland, OR

P.S. You left the Wise Quacks address off the letters page. I had to wade through the fine print on Page 1 before I found it. Help! — M.S.

Dear Lynn and Bill:

I think I am in love with Lynn Graeme.

Forgive me, then, Bill, if I address most of my comments to lovely Lynn, without whom I feel that the present HOWARD THE DUCK could never have been possible.

Ah, lovely Lynn! Heed not the words of those who would disparage this magazine with all manner of harsh words. I didn't read HOWARD #3, but two things stand out in my mind after reading the mail column of #6. First, I am diametrically opposed to nuclear power. Second, yes! HOWARD, the magazine, if not Howard the character, is fighting for truth and justice!! It is making strong

social comments in a manner I thought was dead since the early 1970's. And, Lynn, GOD BLESS ANY MAGAZINE THAT DOES IT!!

To all those whose letters were printed in the Con section, I'd like you to realize one thing: Bill Mantlo's story, whatever it was, sparked a letter-column debate on nuclear power! Isn't that wonderful? My God, people are talking about a relevant social issue! In a comic book! How long has it been??

Yes, friends, HOWARD THE DUCK is the only magazine on the stands today that (a) constantly turns out high-quality stories and art, (b) keeps experimenting and innovating in the true spirit of the "House of Ideas", and (c) addresses relevant social issues.

Marvel's color comics, even the best of them like AVENGERS, have not achieved this magnificent blend of three. I've seen nothing like it since Englehart stopped writing CAPTAIN AMERICA. Innovation? Most of Marvel's books are trapped in a Marvel Comics HOUSE STYLE. Yeechhhh! That's why I dropped SPIDER-MAN, troops. If Lynn hires strange and different artists to do the covers and frontispieces of this magazine, it's all in the name of artistic innovation! HOWARD is the one book in the industry that doesn't stand still!!

I'll be sorry to see Michael Golden go, for he illustrated both of the issues that have so impressed me to write. *Duckworld* is a case in point when it comes to innovation! It was outrageous! Magnificent! Insane and neurotic normals reflect earth society! Photographs melt into artwork until there is no distinguishing them. I couldn't believe it when "Scrounge MacDrake" appeared on page 48 (sure you aren't risking a lawsuit?). Nor did I miss the thousands of little jokes (X-Ducks, Bat-Duck, and Super-Duck comics).

Speaking of Scrounge MacD — er, SCROUNGE MacDRAKE, the idea of hiring Carl Barks to illustrate a Howard story is the most exciting I've ever heard, but you probably won't get more than a cover. Try anyhow! What about Floyd Gottfredson?

Man-Thing next issue? Wonderful! It gives me an excuse to buy it whether I'm collecting Howard or not.

Yowie-Kazowie, Lynn! Someone suggested that nobody is INTERESTED in the 1960's anymore? Lady, I live in the sixties. That was social-commentaries-ville. I have the strange feeling that, tragic time though it was, people *cared* in the '60's. By the time I was old enough to care, too (I am 16 today in 1980), I found that nobody else did any longer. So here I am, a child of the 1960's who doesn't drink, doesn't smoke, doesn't use drugs, a virgin, don't like rock music and utterly aware that the planet earth is a colossal ball of MERDE.

That's for you non-french speakers.

Street Peeple is like dropping into

an older underground comic (for they also have used a slow death) and finding it to be the same as the '60's seemed to have been at the time. My one complaint is that it was FAR TOO SHORT!!

Don't let anyone stop what you are doing! You are sure to gain new readers — at least two for each one you lose! And here am I to prove it, a long-time hold-out on Howard because he was such a fad and I hated to be a conformist. Since 1975 I have refused to buy Howard the Duck, yet here I am — a dead dedicated reader!

Sorry this typing job is such a travesty, but you did say you wanted quick response. There is generally a lapse of time between reading and writing the letter that can run into months. Less than a minute expired between finishing HOWARD #6 and beginning to type this missive.

So the comics return to innovation, excellence and social commentary, and the non-conformists, the social and political activists among us, in short, all who care have got a new battle-cry:

DUCK, AMERICA!
DUCK!

With Love,
Steve Gawronski
"The Phantom Monkeywrench"
330 Friar Tuck Drive
Schereville, IN 247375

Dear Lynn,

Just a note to say you have got to find a place for Trina Robbins!!! She is one of the freshest new artists to ever be seen. I hope she can handle Howard regularly.

Love Your Mag,
Mike Standish
Rt. 9 Box 243-A
Benton, KY 42025

Dear Bill and Company,

Yep, it's me again. After I wrote in about HOWARD #3, I thought I'd never have to write in again. HOOOO BOY! Was I wrong! HOWARD THE DUCK #s 6 & 7 were even *better* than HOWARD #3! Duckworld was refreshingly zany, let's go back there when Howard is fifty, it'll be great, or even better, have Truman Capoultry come to Earth! What a role that'd be! The WACKIES were just... incredible. Gander was a wonderfully fowl (heh, heh) villain and MacScrounge (you guys are gonna need a good lawyer if you keep this stuff up) was about as zany as they come. I loved your version of the Johnny Carson show. I always thought Johnny was a bird brain and here I see the truth! The Times Square scene was great! Snailien: In Space No One Can Hear You Waaugh! Fantastic! As for issue 7, it's good to see Gene Colan back and even better to see Alfredo Alcalá. Kong's semi-retelling was fantastic (again) and the use of the monopoly board as swamp city merely freaked me out. But the highlight of the issue was the Portfolio. Severin, Byrne, Rogers all had great representations but the best was definitely Howard Chaykins's. (Oh, Walt, yours was great, too) But

Howie's takes the cake!! (Or the Drake depending how you look at it. Here's some suggestions for future Drake-folios. Another by Howie, featuring Howard as, You guessed it! Drake Fortune! Or how about Howard as Bogie again, "The Draketese Falcon". Howard as "Drakenstein" or Howard as "Bill Drakelo!" The possibilities are endless, you can even show him as Stan Lee (the name you can come up with yourselves!). Well until issue eight and Drake-man, keep up the insanity and don't let Wally Sidney catch you without your pants on!

Rob Morganbesser

11212 37th Street

Brooklyn, NY 11218

P.S. Bill, thanks for the postcard about HOWARD 3, I'll always treasure it, it shows that Marvel does care!

To Bill, Gene and all the rest,

Issue #6: Well, all I can say about six was that it was the greatest comic book ever conceived. I'm sure it will soon be as much a classic as the Galactus trilogy, the Microverse War, the Dark Phoenix storyline, etc. There are simply too many excellent touches for me to list them all. The best part of the book is the scene where the woman, after touching Howard yells "I can walk without my cane! Howard has helped me." Some other good parts:

The cover, forgetting their luggage, Bev banging her head against the 5 and 10 sign, the comics in the comic rack, Howard giving the store owner a dollar bill with Washington's face on it (the complete opposite of the scene in GS-MT 4) The black and the police ducks, the dog going on the garbage pail, the horses, the cultists, druggies, Bev realizing how hard it is to live in a world she never made, when Howard gets to see his family again, Rom Duck, Duck Micronauts, when Howard realizes he's doing right when his mother says to stand by his convictions and Beverly and how foxy looking Golden draws Bev.

I love HTD so much because each issue is filled with an epic adventure or two. Each story has a long, and good enough plot, and enough characterization to make a movie out of. And you've also got comedy, drama and science-fiction in each issue. I seriously ask you to try to make a movie of HTD.

Finally, I love Street Peeple, but please try to make it longer, or add in another back-up feature, maybe starring Hemlock Shoals. Please think about it and please print my letter.

No Name
No Address

It's been fun, people, these nine issues. And don't go away, because soon everybody's favorite fowl will be back in the four color funnies. Keep watching.

Bye.



REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE HULK GETS MAD?



DON'T MISS THE NEXT RAMPAGE!

**IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN,
READ HULK #26 — ON SALE FEBRUARY
FEATURING DOMINIC FORTUNE, BRIGAND FOR HIRE**


YOUR **BEST** SELECTION IS FROM **BUD PLANT**

CHECK OUR CATALOG



Join the
Adventures
of this Three Foot,
Sword-Swinging
Hero!

CEREBUS the aardvark



CEREBUS has taken comicdom by storm. He's small, but he's tough... smart... and fast! Artist-writer Dave Sim has created a new cult hero. Join the growing fans of this remarkable new comic.

"I personally recommend CEREBUS—it's my favorite comic!" —Bud

Six issues — \$7.50
Save 50¢ off original cover price.



The year is 50 B.C. Gaul is entirely occupied by the Romans. Well, not entirely... One small village of indomitable Gauls still holds out against the invaders! They're led by Asterix, whose magic potion gives him superhuman strength.

Asterix

ASTERIX and pal OBE- LIX star in 22 full length books. Together they're the most popular comic characters in Europe... translated into 28 languages! Each large book is 48 pages in full color.

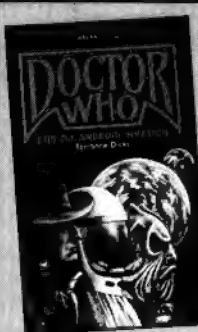
Sample book \$3.95
Save \$1.80 on four books (our choice), only \$14.00



THE TANDRA EPIC

In the tradition of Flash Gordon, TANDRA transports you to a world of warfare and intrigue. Earth Galen has chosen to remain far from his home planet and build The Iron Cloud, a huge flying ship. This ship quickly becomes a pawn in the war between the surface people and The Wizards, who rule a giant ring-world far above the planet. These four books, each complete in itself, begin a gigantic 1600-page graphic novel!

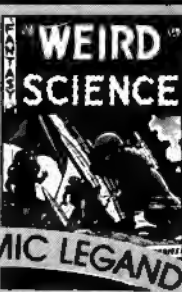
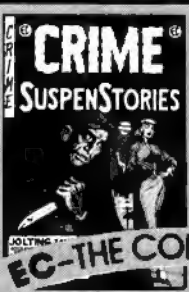
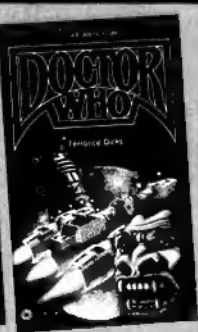
All four: \$7.00



DR. WHO is a mysterious, zany, and 750-year-old Time Lord who hurries through space in a stolen time machine. Since there's a problem with steering, he never lands exactly when or where he plans to. This, along with his desperate desire to bring law and order to the universe and his insatiable curiosity, consistently places him in strange and often perilous adventures!

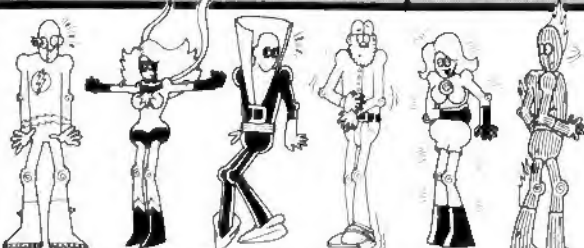
Created in England, this is one of their longest-running and most popular television shows. Now it's taking America by storm in many major cities!

A set of eight paperback novels — \$12.50. Save \$2.00



Have you heard of the legendary EC COMICS? Tales From the Crypt, The Vault of Horror, Shock Suspense, Weird Science... These were published from 1950 to 1965... before the comics code! Now rare and expensive collectors items (averaging \$25 each), these contain many of the best written and drawn stories ever in comics. Regulars include Wood... Frazetta... Davis... Kurtzman... and Severin!

Now a very limited number of EC Reprint sets, published in the early 1970's, are available. Some issues, including #1 and #2, are very rare. A complete, mint set of all twelve issues... \$22.00. A sampler of seven issues (our choice)... \$7.00.



HEMBECK MANIA SWEEPS COMICS FANDOM!

So you're a comics fan, too? Well, join **Fred Hembeck**... one of comics' biggest fans... and get a new view on things! He interviews super heroes... teams up Marvel and DC characters... talks about the all-time great artists and series... and much more. He's always got his tongue-in-cheek, so don't look for any dry, scholarly analysis here! Lots of fun and highly recommended!

THE COMPLETE HEMBECK: Hembeck; Hembeck 1980; The Bride of Hembeck; Bah, Hembeck; Smilin' Ed #1; ABCC #150.

THE HEMBECK SPECIAL DEAL: All six books, an \$11.25 value, for just \$10!

Please send me:

We'll enclose our catalog FREE with any order.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cerebus, 6 issues—\$7.50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Who, 8 books—\$12.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asterix, 1 book—\$3.95 | <input type="checkbox"/> EC Reprints, 7 issues—\$22.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asterix, 4 books—\$14.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> EC Reprints, 12 issues—\$27.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tandra, 4 books—\$7.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Hembeck, 6 books—\$10.00 |

☐ Rush me the catalog only. Enclosed is \$1 (includes postage), refundable with my first order.



Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Order Total \$ _____
Postage: Please add \$1 if order is under \$10 \$ _____
Calif. residents add 6% sales tax \$ _____
Total \$ _____

BUD PLANT, INC. P.O. Box 1886M5, Grass Valley, California 95945